SHADOWRUN®

AETHEROLOGY

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CATALYST game labs™

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JACKPOINT

CONNECTING TO JACKPOINT VPN...
...IDENTITY SPOOFED
...ENCRYPTION KEYS GENERATED
...CONNECTED TO ONION ROUTERS
>>>LOGIN: XXXXXXXXXXXXX
>>>ENTER PASSCODE: XXXXXXXXXXXXX
...BIOMETRIC SCAN CONFIRMED
CONNECTED TO *<ERROR: NODE UNKNOWN>*

"A DOOR OPENS BETWEEN THE WAKING AND SLEEPING WORLDS. ENTER."

JACKPOINT STATS
Interaction rate: –4%
Posts per hour: –12%
Today's content quality (signal:noise): 4:5

LATEST NEWS
- There are roads less traveled that call to all of us, but then there are reasons those roads are so barren. I've managed to get an old associate to describe some of them. Those of you that can walk those ways should travel with caution. –Glitch

PERSONAL ALERTS
- You have 3 new **private messages**.
- Your internal Q score is **49** (down 3 points)
- You have 18 new **responses** to your JackPoint posts.
- You have **2** new friend requests; **3** friends have dropped you.

THE INNER CIRCLE
You are visible to your closest **2** levels of contacts.

Your Eyes Only posts have been viewed **6** times

CURRENT TIME
11 04 2076, 1313 hrs

WELCOME BACK TO JACKPOINT, CHUMMER:
Welcome back to JackPoint, chummer; your last connection was severed 76 hours, 11 minutes, 57 seconds ago.

TODAY'S HEADS UP
Well I asked for it. Magister has been moving up in the world since I last met him. His ego also grew, as he's been involved in special projects at the Draco Foundation. I made a deal with him, an exchange of information for a translation/organization of it. Not that I couldn't have asked someone here, but there is a degree of expertise needed, and Magister was the best to handle it. If you want to feel insulted or slighted by that, feel free. —Glitch

INCOMING
- The Matrix has become the home of a number of different "friends." Be careful around strangers. [Tag: 10 AIs]
- There are a lot of strange things in the shadows. Stand up to them by being strong, faster, and stranger. [Tag: Run Faster]
- Sometimes the shadows clear enough to see the drek you're standing in. [Tag: Sioux Nation: Shadows in Focus]

TOP NEWS ITEMS
- Sioux Forces went on alert after a unidentified aircraft passed over their northern border last night. Official sources have not commented, although the UCAS government has decried the prolonged alert as needlessly provocative. Link
- A Shaiwase employee, Kevin Jennings, was arrested this morning by Lone Star officers for attempting to sell a firearm within 25 meters of a public school. The City Prosecutor's office has failed to comment as US Marshalls review the file. Link
- "Ring Around the Rosy" has joined "Old McDonald Had A Farm" on the banned list at the Fairview Ohio School District after Rosy McDonald's family threatened another discrimination lawsuit. The young human child was repeated tormented by her ork classmates with the song. Link

POSTED BY: MAGISTER

Once Big D offered all that nuyen for the study of dangerous astral phenomenon, I realized I wanted to throw my hat into the ring. It wasn't that I was that good, it was because I had the advantage of access to the Denver Nexus. I was pretty confident that I had the connections to help me find any information I needed. Keeping up with the corporations was no easy task, but suffice to say, it was a good investment of my time to collect the four million. I even came up with a scientific name for the study: Aetherology.

- Cheater!
- Elijah

- And you don't keep tabs on the Atlantean Foundation's movements to beat them to the punch?
- Winterhawk

One thing led to another, and the Draco Foundation offered me more work studying a variety of puzzling artifacts and news articles, some of which predate the Awakening. Then Glitch offered me the logs of a guy named Dr. Gordon in an information exchange. I was surprised. I knew the name—Dr. Gordon was an early pioneer in mapping the astral planes. I asked him how such works survived since they were supposedly destroyed in a fire that killed the doc. Apparently Dr. Gordon was paranoid enough to have an offsite backup. It was only recently uncovered by runners using the location as a safe house.

The logs I found out were chaotically organized, sometimes cryptic, and sometimes the ravings of a madman. I had some colorful words for Glitch on the quality of the data, but I persevered, filling gaps with my own knowledge and with appropriated references from the Spiritech Corporation, who had attempted their own "mapping" of the metaplanes. I haven't gone insane from reading his works yet, so I figure that means I'm making progress.

There's always weird stuff cropping up in the magical world, like the Dendra Schematics, the Piri Reis map, the orichalcum pages of the Gaf manuscript, and so on. Most of these have been hidden away by some organization, like the Atlantean or Draco Foundations, which are fascinated by the possibility of powerful magic and uncovering lost knowledge—and then keeping it away from anyone else till they figure it out. But Dr. Gordon's theory is one they wouldn't be able to hide, if I could verify that it was true.

Let me circle back a sec to some details I've come to accept. Standard thaumaturgical research says that the passing of Halley's Comet in 2061 caused mana levels to rise for a short period, leading several magic-related events. Dr. Gordon theorized that this wasn't the first time this had occurred. Halley's Comet had an even closer approach in 1910, and the closest it had come to Earth was in 1835, when it passed at less than 0.5 AU. During both of those years, there also happened to be a corresponding Kreutz Sungrazer comet event, which was so close and bright enough, it could be seen in daylight.

Now back to Dr. Gordon. He suspected that while magic levels weren't high by today's standard during these two events, there was just enough of a spike for what people of the time called "dream walking," which we could correspond to planar/astral travel. This would be where most mages would scoff, saying that would be impossible with much to learn and prepare for, especially with the Dweller on the Threshold to contend with. Dr. Gordon, however, says that during those years, it was possible to make a journey to the metaplanes. Maybe not travel to the elemental ones or Faeree, but to the metaplane of man. Surely, he thought, that one could be bridged. And the Dweller on the Threshold? Who knows, maybe he was still asleep, waiting for the next world.

Why would I tell this fantastic story? Because I tried to explain away some of Dr. Gordon's ideas and suggestions and couldn't fully do it. Gordon firmly believed that man can travel to the metaplanes without dealing with the Dweller, and not randomly like through an astral gate. If I took his works out of the equation, there are still rumors of the various artifacts found named after navigational instruments: sextant, compass, map, etc. There is also the elephant in the Matrix that corporations have not bothered to hide, for to do so would validate its existence, the *Al Azif*. This book is too fantastic to believe it really exists. In Dunkelzahn's will, he gives this book to Dr. Daniel Gordon to use it to map the astral planes. Dr. Gordon's description of the book gives me the impression that it is partially burned, and he had trouble translating it from Arabic. The only other mention of this book is by the author H.P. Lovecraft. Interestingly enough, when he was asked where the name of the book came from, he said it came to him in a dream in 1910.

ASTRAL SEA

The Astral Sea is vast, some might say infinite. The human view of astral space is infantile, like a child standing on a beach, believing that the ocean is the end of everything. That belief is erroneously based on a three-dimensional perspective of the Gaiasphere. The astral sea is the threshold one can cross from the astral plane. It bridges all other planes. Through the astral sea, one could cross from the Gaiasphere to the lunarsphere without facing the vast void in between. Given a large enough biosphere on another planet, one could travel to it with the correct tools to navigate to them. The translation of the book has provided me with formulas to construct the tools needed to accompany me to the astral plane.

The step from the astral plane to the sea is one of mental preparation and perspective; less preparation than facing the Dweller on the Threshold, but greater risk.

ASTRAL NAVIGATION

How Dr. Gordon was able to travel to these locations without being killed is a mystery. The simplest solution is that he merely read them out of the book and copied them as his own notes. I suspect that isn't entirely the case, though. It may be that there was an artifact included with the book that helped him in the journey; something similar to the shadow cloak, perhaps. It's also possible that he crafted his own devices based on instructions from the book since it would be impossible to travel to the deep metaplanes as he described without dying or outside help.

At this time he wouldn't have had access to the Piri Reis map or the Sextant of Worlds. I'm assuming he made himself a version of the sextant. Navigational maps or charts must be in the book to be used with the sextant. The only extra thing I got is Zheng He. Zheng He is wrong time period, wrong location, but he was a great fleet admiral during the Ming Dynasty. There may be some other unnamed artifact that he didn't have to build. Zheng He made seven trips where he picked up treasures from Africa, and he purportedly made it to the Americas before the fleet was dismantled.

In my own fact-checking efforts, I have travelled to the metaplane of man by way of an astral gate and have seen things as he had described. This creates another quandary, though—is the metaplane I traveled to the actual place that Dr. Gordon mentioned, or was the metaplane's existence influenced by what I have read, making it what he describes as a "bubble metaplane"? The spirits I talked to gave me cryptic answers. Suffice it to say, I believe these locations exist and can be reached without traveling by astral sea. I cannot, however, trace his path to verify his journey. That would be impossible without knowing the ritual—and probably a little insane.

The threshold is just out of the corner your eye on the astral plane. Knowing it is there, I can feel the vibration and hear the subtle thrum, like if I push on the shadowy plane of existence, it would burst, drowning me in an astral ocean. It took two ritual attempts, with the second attempt including Grauda waiting for me on the other side. With a mental jump to the left and a step to the right, I was there. My first observance of the threshold filled me with awe and wonder as the silence turned instantly to a turbulent roar. Astral creatures with no known planar origin existing on the edge of our Gaiasphere were clinging to a great white waterfall of astral energies. It was like observing a tidal pool, the existence of creatures in a unique ecosystem. I was awestruck by a great crustacean, whose shell was camouflaged in astral constructs and impressions of metahuman origin the size of a city. This monstrosity clung to the precipice while endless energies washed over it like a waterfall. The edge was a cacophonic chaos of light and sound. I could not tell if what I saw was living or merely my mind forming pareidolia from the threshold. If size is anything to the nature of the inhabitants in the astral sea, no wonders dragons do not travel this way. Grauda, my fire salamander, was cautiously at my side as I approached the fall. When I passed through, there was nothing. It was quiet; the astral sea was a vast white desert with a canopy of unrecognizable constellations. The threshold that I passed through was gone, just endless desert. While there was light and shadow, there was no sun, no day, nor night.

Using the sextant I got some bearings and started marching. Without guidance or navigational tools, one could be lost forever. My astral form was heavier and couldn't travel at the mental pace I thought I should be able to sustain. It appears that this form is approximate in appearance and capabilities to my physical form. This made things more difficult. The book does not mention this or many of the pitfalls of the astral sea, but then again this is the road less travelled. If one died by one of these perils, who would have witnessed it to report on it? It became mentally taxing to continue this way, especially with the timing of things, so I climbed on the back of Grauda and he was able to move at a much faster pace over the dunes. There must be others that have taken this path, for there are what I consider to be impressions in the landscape; trails leading off into the distance. It may be a phantom, but on one occasion I thought I saw a ship with sails on the horizon.

I don't know for how long we traveled on our bearing with the never-changing sky, but I finally approached the first metaplane. I thought I would have to cross another threshold, but it seems that thresholds are only for the physical plane. The metaplanes have a different transition onto the astral sea, some truly like the coast of a new land.

METAPLANES

EXCERPTED FROM DR. GORDON'S WRITINGS

What are the metaplanes? Are they the manifestation of mankind's beliefs or doors to other worlds? If they are manifestations of mankind, then do they still exist if belief ceases to exist? How can you have two mages of different traditions go to the same metaplane and experience vastly different perceptions of it? If a mage can go to worlds known to him through his traditions, what about worlds unknown? How would he know that they even exist since there is no traveling from point A to point C while seeing point B? I, Dr. Gordon, have been bequeathed a fairly thick tome. This tome has inspired me with visions of the metaplanes laid out before me on an infinite sea. Beyond this, deeper into aether, are more worlds to explore. It's incredible.

DR. GORDON'S METAPLANAR TERMINOLOGY

INTERPRETED BY MAGISTER

FRACTURED METAPLANE

A fractured metaplane is when a metaplane is skewed from the rest of the plane by the intersection of another metaplane or the physical realm. This fracturing can make them either hard to find in either realm like Seelie Court, or an astral shallow in both realms. Traveling from the fractured plane to the intersected metaplane(s) is easy to do, and in some cases accidental crossings could occur.

HYPER-METAPLANE

This is where the confusion lies—is there one metaplane of man or infinite planes corresponding to various religious and magical faiths? Avalon, Guinee, the Land of water, earth, and sky are some examples of planes that have been encountered. Dr. Gordon hypothesizes that these are, for lack of a better description, "hyper-metaplanes" formed within the larger metaplane. Most travelers going through the Dweller on the Threshold only see and travel to the metaplane they are "supposed" to go to. It is only the skilled navigator that travels for example, to the metaplane of man, who can then cross astral seas or other obstacles to these other metaplanar embodiments of man. These "islands" usually have less interaction with the rest of the metaplane and can form their own physical characteristics. They are also more permanent than the bubble metaplanes. There are similar formations in Fairee and Shadow metaplanes, so it can be assumed that "hyper-metaplanes" can exist in every metaplane. How long such a hyper-metaplane can last is undeterminable due to shorter lifespan of humans. Suffice it to say, it may be thousands to tens of thousands of years even without metahumans remembering that the place even exits. That probably sounds egocentric considering there are dragons around.

- Sounds more like quantum mechanics than magic.
- Clockwork

BUBBLE METAPLANE

Another hypothesized idea is there are short-lived metaplanes that "bubble up" from the existing metaplane. The bubble metaplanes are short lived and there is no known way to navigate from or to them. It is assumed that extraordinary powers conjure them into existence, and that the metaplane is constructed for the astral traveler after going to the Dweller on the Threshold as a result of metaplanar quests. Their lifespan begins and ends with the traveler's visit.

- Dr. Gordon's theories and efforts to categorize the metaplanes probably helped him along the path to insanity.
- Winterhawk
- There's another four megapulses of him raving about worlds beyond ours and the physical version of elements existing in our universe. Then it goes downhill with mysterious passages in the book for things such as immortality and bringing back the dead. He's worse than Plan 9. Take what I have compiled with a grain of salt.
- Magister

THE PLANE OF FAERIE

It is an endless glaive perpetually at the cusp of autumn. Few native animus/animi spirits can be found here. The clouds don't move, yet there is a cold breeze that blows through. The faerie denizens live a basic, simple existence out here. Huts, burrows and caves are occupied by a host of brownies, knockers, kappa and other fae. One thing to note is that while the faeries look humanoid, they do not have the same emotional needs or concepts as us. Some are subservient as the domovoï and need to be tasked with simple chores, such as harvesting grain, grinding flour or tending sheep. Others like the leprechauns and clurichaun run mills and breweries operated

by these tasked spirits. While the clurichaun consume some, or most, of their efforts, the leprechauns run their business in exchange for currency forged at the Seelie and Unseelie Courts.

I wondered what I would find on this metaplane as there have been legends and stories of these spirits coming to the physical plane. My visitation is largely ignored by those going about their business. I assume because I have no hierarchical relationship or impact to what they are doing, I'm not important enough to be bothered with.

BROCÉLIANDE

Brocéliande, the land within the metaplane, is covered with a mix of rolling hills, lakes, grassy fields, thickets, and one forest, all resembling Brittany itself. The fae here are called the korrigan (the People) and while mostly consist of picti, there are various other types of korrigan fae, like domovoï, lutins, polvaks, and pixies. Korrigans live in several loosely organized clans or tribes oriented around an extended family nucleus. The villages of korrigans vary as much as the fae themselves from the stone dolem houses of the picti to the woven thicket home of the polvaks. Collectively, the korrigans have a natural curiosity of the physical realm and a love for nature. They also have a distain of how man has treated the world; Metahumans are merely an occupying force on Earth and believe that metahumans "appropriated" the wild lands, banishing ancestors.

Korrigans in general are very unruly and can be childish and immature. The extreme end of this is the lutins, cousins to the picti, who behave as mischievous bullies even to other fae. This behavior had exiled the korrigan from the Seelie and Unseelie Courts ages ago, not that they care about such rules. Their reluctance to deal with the mundane world and its attractiveness to them has been a challenge. Korrigan have been blamed for activities ranging from childish "raiding" of metahuman houses for interesting trinkets and foodstuffs to more dangerous destruction of roads and railways to allow animals to cross.

Another common connection of the korrigan fae is the ritual tattooing as part of a passage into adulthood. Adult korrigan are marked with blue tattoos that are said to imbue them with power and strength. This may be true given some of the abilities they are rumored to possess. In Brit-

tany, the korrigan seem to be unaffected by the Mist and can guide others around such dangers. Other rumors persist that the mist conceals a greater number of korrigan living in Brittany and/or they guide the druids in controlling the Mist. Korrigans have been officially recognized as a self-governing body in the Brocéliande Forest in France.

SEELIE AND UNSEELIE COURT

The Seelie and Unseelie Courts are somewhere in the middle of this metaplane. The courts are the only two cities in Faerie that have any resemblance to metahuman civilization. Neither court is wholly good or evil in our terms of understanding, though the more violent spirits such as bogies and bogles live in Unseelie Court. They used to be the twin jewels of the metaplane with armies of armored vaettirs and elvars ruled by a monarchy from tall marbled palaces; one light, one dark. Hundreds of thousands of faeries live and work in the courts and surrounding lands.

Old legends tell of battles between the courts over rule of the metaplane. At one point the Seelie Court tried to create a ritual to banish the Unseelie Court. At the same time, the Unseelie Court was doing the same. What occurred was a sophisticated fracturing of the Faerie Plane that placed both courts in limbo, meaning they did not exist in any metaplane. However they both found themselves bordering on the physical realm and Faerie metaplane. The Seelie Court was able cross into the world in what became Tír na nÓg, while the Unseelie Court crossed into what became known as Mag Mell. Lady Brane Deigh currently rules over the Seelie Court, though while it is known that the Unseelie Court is ruled by Lord Gwyn, associations with him are mere speculation.

THE NORTHERN ISLANDS

Also known as Tuatha, this is a hyper-metaplane of rich green islands and the legendary homeland of elves. Castles and keeps dot the isles. Its people are the Tuatha Dé Danann, an elf-like fae with luminous skin. It is said that the Tuatha, or Bright Shining Spirits, were not the original inhabitants of this metaplane. Stories tell of great wars against the fomoire and then the firbolg that took place ages ago and spilled over to our earthly realm through an astral rift as the fomorians and firbolg sought refuge. In great cloudships carrying a hundred thousand troops, the Tuatha took over the metaplane and killed those who tried to flee to Earth.

Fomoire are three-eyed giants with a dreaded gaze that can burn a man with just a look. Without a home, they were scattered to the metaplanes. It is rumored that some still survive in the lands of Id while others sought asylum in the Unseelie Court. Firbolg were never native to the Northern Islands; they are raiders from within the Metaplane of Faerie. They appear as an elf-like fae with dark skin and dark eyes, and with a more pronounced nose and high angular cheekbones. Their stronghold on earth was destroyed by the Tuatha, but they still have smaller outposts on the Fae metaplane.

ASTRAL PHENOMENA

ASTRAL SHALLOW

An astral shallow is a point where the barrier between the physical realm and the astral plane is thin. This allows for an area of space that permits even mundanes a view of astral space. Astral shallows can be two dimensional, like a window, or a three-dimensional amorphous field. Those within the area are perceived by everyone as from the physical plane superimposed by astral perception. It's pretty trippy for mundanes to see their own auras, spirits, or the astral signature of a spell after being cast. Add some drugs and they can probably taste it.

ASTRAL RIFT

An astral rift is a connecting gateway from the physical plane to a metaplane. It can also connect a metaplane to another metaplane or multiple metaplanes. Some appear as a flat tear in space, others are an area of visual ripples or a fountain of sparkling energy. Regardless of the appearance, the effect is the same. The barrier is all but gone at these points, allowing even mundanes to astrally project and travel to the metaplane. Astral rifts are two-way bridges, so spirits from the connecting metaplane can come to the physical realm. This was the case with the DeeCee Rift before it closed. That rift was called a deep astral rift connecting to the far metaplanes. The only other semi-stable natural astral rifts are the Nazca Geoglyphs.

THE PLANE OF BEASTS

The metaplane of beasts is the embodiment of primeval instinct. The lands are similar to Earth, but some environments are even more extreme, or even impossible to find. Mammalian, reptilian, avian, and any other forms of animal life can be found here. Some of the animus spirits appear to be those found on the physical realm, but then there are chimerical hybrids like the giraffe-drag-on-lynx and peacock-tapir-alligator. There are others still that are mere embodiment of bestial aspects: such as Coils, a spherical mass of roiling, snake like bodies; Fang, a shadowy fury creature with a large, morphing mouth and a shifting mass of teeth; and Hunt, a great shadow with various predatory eyes and ears, and a mouth that howls in delight of a chase and pursuing prey. Even some of the flora is animal-like akin to anemones, Venus fly-traps, or corals that wait for prey to come to them. Beast

spirits have some resemblance to our concepts of social structures with tribes, packs, and social hierarchy with the dominant alpha leading the group. Rare is the sight of any artificial structures beyond that of nests and burrows.

AERIE

Aerie is the home of hundreds of avian spirits residing in massive redwood trees covering one of the highest mountain peaks. Flocks of eagles, hawks, owls, and other hyper-realistic raptor spirits live higher on the peak above other beast spirits in the form of crows, pigeons, and finches. Mingled among them on the mountain are clans of flying bestial spirits of various forms, pushing upwards in both rank and elevation.

Reigning over all are the great eagles and thunderbirds with the king of the mountain, Lighting-over-Water, a spirit the size of a roc, embodying strength and majesty with four wings colored red and gold. At his side is Queen Mystras, the double-headed eagle, equal in size to her husband and twice as wise.

There is a circle of twisted branches from a dozen trees where the Council of Raptors resides and passes judgment with the Guilds of Corvus and Strig who offer their counsel and the Order of Phoenixes to execute said judgement. The Corvus Guild, composed of crows, ravens, and jackdaws, have made themselves indispensable to the council with their cunning, much to the displeasure to the Owls of the Strig and the Order of Phoenixes who used to have equal say in the matter.

Other bestial denizens come here for advice from the council, or they seek refuge beneath the forest canopy. Those who come without invitation become food for various flocks.

ISLAND OF TANDORA

This is a hyper-metaplanar island resembling prehistoric earth. A dreadful place of beast spirits ten to thirty meters tall and weighing several tons looking like various dinosaurs or beasts with fearsome scaly or feathered appearances.

METAPLANE OF MAN

The Metaplane of Man is vast and the closest to the physical realm. This metaplane is a conglomeration of cultural landscapes with impossible layers of historic and futuristic architecture. While it's called the metaplane of man, not all of its denizens are humanoid. The spirits here relate to metahumanity's emotionally, intellectually, and perhaps even physically, so they can take various shapes and sizes, such as the wall-like burghs and the floating, laser-projecting ambits. Also unique to the metaplane are non-native spirits that inhabit it. Spirits appearing as cats and dogs live among the native spirits. There is no one leader that magicians or spirits go to for guidance or help. Some seek out Mr. Wickwind of Jinglur, living in the pinnacle skyscraper of the city for his various social contacts across the metaplane. Others may find Mr. BookBinder at the library of Alexandria more helpful in finding archaic lore. Neither, however, works pro bono. The metaplane is also vast with hyper-metaplanar countries like Avalon, Guinee Thrudheim, and lands unheard of in our world. When I first navigated to the shores of this metaplane I found the lands of Zar and its capitol, Thalarion, the city of a Thousand Wonders whose golden domed palace can be seen just past the horizon. In speaking with some of the inhabitants there, they've told me of even more countries like Rinar, Ogrothan, Celephaïs, and Zah.

There are non-natives who also persist in this metaplane. Living in this metaplane are a sapient race of cats and dogs, whose language of mews and barks can be learned by any traveler to the metaplane of man. The cats have said that they do not have their own metaplane, though they should be from a metaplane of beasts, and instead give a false impression of domestication to satisfy needs of food and shelter. They say they have brethren on earth, but I have never seen or met one. Dogs have a similar story though most feel obligated to protect those on the metaplane. There are also creatures that include a furry squirrel-like creature called the woog and immense albino frogs the size of men, neither of whom have a corresponding version on earth, nor do they fit any aspect of man. All of them could be vagrants or invasive spirits from other metaplanes.

MORE ASTRAL PHENOMENA

BACKGROUND COUNT

Magicians are always talking about the background count affecting their mojo. Even in this document I talk about changes in the background count because of astral phenomenon. But what exactly is background count? Let's start from the basics. The first thing you should understand is that magic can be drawn from the aether for spells and powers, and it is all around us and has a connection to all life. This has been established as fact, as magic cannot be performed outside the Gaiasphere and proven with space stations creating biospheres that allow the practice of magic. Now thinking about life on earth, you can see that mana would not be evenly distributed, but also not totally absent. Background count is a change from the relative balance and the availability of this ambient energy. Where there are places that are sterile, magic is low, in places called mana ebbs and voids. Any area of magic lower than normal is termed as having a negative background count. Places that have higher-than-normal positive background count do not affect a magician's ability to cast magic unless it's been psychoactively fixed, which brings me to my second point.

The second thing you should understand is mana is very sensitive to man. His emotions and his exploits can disrupt the accessibility of magic. From a rock concert to a violent robbery, from toxic waste to smog, mana becomes psychoactively charged, making it difficult to use if your magic is not aligned. A positive background count that is affected by this charge is called aspected. If it's based on a physical place with some emotional or psychological significance, the aspected mana is tied to a domain. Cathedrals and monasteries are domains with the aspected mana flowing through them aligned toward a religious tradition. A toxic waste dump is aligned toward toxic magic. Depending on the strength and permanence of the aspected portion of the positive mana, it can be difficult for a magician to perform magic. This is what makes toxic shamans so dangerous to fight in their own territory, as it both hinders a normal magician and benefits the toxic one. As I mentioned, even a rock concert can temporarily aspect mana, making it difficult to perform magic in the area. How the magic is aspected varies; some places may only work with a specific skill, or set of skills; others may be specific to a group of people or tradition(s). Magicians have learned this trick and create their own domains, aligning the mana toward their tradition through geomancy.

The third thing is that mana is unpredictable and unstable, hence my research into astral phenomenon. Mana can surge in an area and cause chaos, making it difficult to practice magic. Higher levels of mana are called mana warps, and they can come out of nowhere and cause mana storms, among other things. Almost all surges are aspected in some fashion, based where they originated.

DAOINEANN DRAOIDHEIL

Daoineann Draoidheil or "Standing Storms," are intense storms that coincide with a mana storm around Tír na nÓg. There are three of them permanently swirling off the coast. The first one exists around a ten-kilometer coastal area near the Giant's Causeway in County Antrim. The second runs along the northern shore of Dingle Bay, with the third sitting along the southern shoreline of Donegal Bay. The storms may move a few kilometers or change in size, but they never disappear. These storms were the first ones I studied many years ago. While they can be considered mana storms, they have some unique properties that I have not seen elsewhere. First, as I've stated, they are permanent storms, a miniature manifestation of swirling clouds, rain, and lightning that can range from one to ten kilometers in size. The second unique feature is the magical domain is not exactly chaotic like a mana storm. This is more fractal in nature, which is more dangerous if you don't understand where the energy flows. A mundane example is shooting a laser at a disco ball made up of both mirrors and glass. You don't know where the laser light would end up. So imagine casting a fireball through a Daoineann Draoidheil, it may not hit the intended target, if it forms at all. And third, at the heart of each of the storms is a powerful matrix of energy, which I will discuss further.

Given the inherit dangers of sorcery in a mana storm, one would think that magicians in the Tír would avoid these locations. On the contrary, the Druid order of the Sun and Moon routinely set up rituals to harness the mana storm for their endeavors. One such ritual is the formation of an astral gateway to the Northern Islands. It is conjecture, but it is maybe at these three points, the astral plane is weakest, bridging to that metaplane. It may also be a fracture as the gateway only leads to that metaplane, but it doesn't explain the storms. It does add credence to the legend of spirits coming in great sky ships to war over the island, though that would mean these spots have existed for a long time.

Another theory I have is that there is a relationship between the Daoineann Draoidheil and the Veil. I've seen intense magical energy shoot out from these storms into the veil. What I don't know is if it's cause and effect—and if so, which one is the cause?

MANA STORM

Mana storms are violent and unpredictable disturbances of magical energy. They move through the physical and astral plane in a seemly random pattern, leaving magical destruction and chaos in their wake. They originate in places with higher-than-normal mana levels. They are triggered when an eddy of higher mana energy moves from the place of high energy. Astrally, the storm appears as a shimmering swirling cloud, while physically the storm most likely take on the characteristics of the domain it grew from and can appear as storm clouds, sand storms, or tornadoes. The area covered by a mana storm varies from a kilometer to several kilometers wide. The most common characteristic of mana storms is the spontaneous manifestation of elemental energies. The next, slightly less common trait, is illusory effects. The most famous of mana storms are the Maya Cloud, the frequent mana storms around Sydney Australia and Daoineann Draoidheil. Mana storms are normally quick and violent, lasting a few hours before they dissipate.

- Great. He's become the great Doctor Doolittle and can speak to animals. Wonder if he has parseltongue?
- Slamm-0!

- Those that can summon Beast spirits can communicate to them. This is not surprising to those of a shamanic tradition.
- Mika

There have been questions asking if this is the metaplane of man, if it is heaven or hell or if the ancestor spirits really do travel to this place. I won't get into a debate over religion; however, I can say that belief factors in the formation and view of hyper-metaplanes and especially bubble metaplanes. What may hurt your brain thinking about is that if every culture and religion has their own hyper-metaplane, what happens to those hyper metaplanes if the culture or religion disappears?

Another interesting spirit in the metaplane of man are the Eidolon, who are denizens with knowledge and appearance of those once living. How they acquired such knowledge or appearance is beyond my comprehension. I believe they are some of the original "dreamwalkers" who somehow stayed in the astral plane or free spirits who managed to travel to Earth between Awakenings. Sufficed to say, they exist.

- Have you seen Elvis and how is he?
- Slamm-0!

- Who?
- Turbobunny

- Am I the only one who watches old trids?
- Slamm-0!

- You're the only one to admit to it.
- Netcat

CELEPHAÏS

Celephaïs is situated in the valley of Ooth-Nargai beside the Astral Sea. Its people and the turquoise temples of Nath-Horthath are not affected by the passage of time

the way the rest of the metaplane is. While the priests and lords in the rest of the plane have considerable longevity or cyclic life, time moves much slower for Celephaïs. It is here that they mention great dreamships built to allow navigation around the plane of man by way of the astral sea. These ships have allowed the denizens of the metaplane to trade and travel to all the kingdoms within the metaplane. It is assumed that from the great dream ships came the idea of sun barges on Earth allowing travel to the metaplane. King Kuranes of Celephaïs is a polite gentleman with an English accent. He appears to have knowledge of the physical realm by way of England, but he talks about events two centuries old as if they are current events. There is no record of such a man in England, but Celephaïs has some buildings and streets similar to pictures of Cornwall in the nineteenth century.

HUDSON VALLEY

[a.k.a. Western New York Metaplanar Nexus, a.k.a. "Burned-Over District" a.k.a. "Psychic Highway"]

The Hudson Valley area is a unique zone on the physical realm on earth as well as in the metaplanes. While it could be defined as a fractured metaplane like Seelie Court or the Land of Zah, it's more of a kaleidoscope or nexus where the astral sea is the shallowest, even non-existent, allowing easy travel to several hyper Metaplanes of Man as well as the Elemental, Fauna, and Floral metaplanes just by traveling the "length" of the valley. I can only speculate on this phenomenon. Maybe it's a result of the formation of many hyper-metaplanes from this site alone; maybe it pre-existed the Sixth World as a metaplanar crack that the hyper-metaplanes collected around; it may even be similar to the denizens of Asgard, who could have established colonies in this valley prior to man, thinning the astral by their very presence.

There are many travelers through the Hudson Valley, which currently appears as nineteenth century America. Why they travel varies by the nature of the spirits themselves, though there are many from the hyper-metaplanes of man, who trade wares and information that might attract them. Hearth spirits have built many accommodations for the weary traveler along the Valley. The most famous is the Pertwee Inn. It resides on the corner of Firth and Bastille in Penn Yan, corner of A Street and Pile in the town of Kent, down a dirt road on a hill in a small village. It is the same building that lies on three hyper-metaplanes, and patrons may end up in a different town/plane accidentally just exiting the building. In the village of Penn Yan, there is a council of seven elders, denizens from various metaplanes who exert some authority over the Hudson Valley.

ID

Beneath the metaplane are the darker/primal aspects of men, embodied by ghoul like creatures and giants living in an "underground" world. This world is a mish-mashed collection of cemeteries, catacombs, fortifications, and ruined cities. Violence, fear, and self-destructive tendencies of man are prevalent here. This place is collectively known as Id. Pirates and smugglers risk travel to the Id for earthly riches and materials deemed illegal in other parts of the metaplane. This is the assumed place where Carnage, Harrows and Harbringers can inhabit. There is one ruler over Id, but many warlords, each trying to rise not too high, lest he be undermined by the others. "Warlord" being an appropriate term, as The Warlords Dachi and Bragus, powerful harrows, continue to raid and pillage the lands of Id on red and white horses, while the warlord Perchal, a harbinger, sails the many rivers of Id in a ship with black sails. The Shantor mine, once occupied by the late warlord Shantor, used to be a catacomb built by the Lethwellian priests to house royalty and the rich with three hundred chambers along a six-hundred-step spiral staircase. It has since been raided for its precious stones gathered for the dead. There are stories of processions of undead priests wrapped in their yellow robes, spirits that ascend to the metaplane and collect what was stolen. Like the rest of the Metaplane of Man, there are dark hyper-metaplanes embodying metahuman fears. Places like Carcean, Kadath and Miggon can be reached from Id.

Besides the toads are crawlers—cockroach creatures the size of a child, with flexible feelers for legs. They are rare, but frequently hide here. They are not true Invae, but something more sinister.

- While these sound like macabre tales, keep in mind the mentality of the traveler and the source of his knowledge.
- Man-of-Many-Names

MR. DARKE

There's a big file on Mr. Darke at the Draco Foundation, and it's still active. This is interesting considering the guy has been recorded as deceased for about a decade. I bring him up as relevant to the spirits hiding on the Hyper-metaplane of Id. If you haven't heard of him, he's some sort of psycho who was creating chaos of human misery behind the scenes. God only knows what his agenda was. Rumors of Mr. Darke go hand in hand with reports of albino toads and crawlers. The Draco Foundation believes that Mr. Darke is able to summon such creatures and is trying to attain more formulaic details before it becomes an event like the Invae invasion of Chicago. There is very little hard evidence on the whereabouts of Mr. Darke, or even clear evidence if he still exists, and if so in what form. Investigators are looking to see if he kept any journals that could shed like on the dark arts that he learned. Others have looked into the Nuttall Codex from the 11th century and found glyphs resembling crawlers associated with an unknown god.

MIGGON

As a hyper-metaplane, this land appears to have manifested from the global fears of atomic weaponry. It is an Earth of an earlier time period devastated by nuclear war. The sky is hazy with a constant fall of ash and a strong smell of combustion. The skeletal frames of buildings stick out of debris fields. The inhabitants of this plane are the tribes Yaggil and Yasmal. Their members display a hodgepodge of ethnic backgrounds as they try to survive and build enclaves against mutant and toxic animi. Other inhabitants include the wandering Kr'u'Ba, rock-like creatures glowing hot with radiation. Kr'u'Ba appear to be possible outcasts from the elemental plane of fire.

CARCEAN

The Carcean hyperplane manifested from the global fears of VITAS and might have been built upon a previous hyper-metaplane based on a fear of plagues. It has a more modern appearance, though currently it is mostly abandoned. Spirits of pestilence and contagion rule this plane, which is also inhabited by other spirits and the ghoul or vampire; those infected by HMMVV.

KADATH

The ruins of Kadath are believed to have been abandoned long before man arrived. It sits in a mountain pass as an entrance to the land of Id. The ruins were built with incredible sized stone blocks with entrances ten meters tall. It is an empty city save for paired hippogriff statues, three times the size of known hippogriffs in the Sixth World, that perch on thirty columns around the city. As I stood at the gates, I felt a foreboding feeling. It lingered long enough that even the ghouls who followed me didn't stay long. The existence of Kadath leads to many questions that cannot be answered.

METAPLANE OF PLANTS

This metaplane has huge green oceans filled with algae, kelp, and coral. From the large coral reefs that rise above the water are islands filled with grasses, and groves of tree-like life. Older islands merge with decomposing plant life, forming larger islands growing trees that then allow for the growth of more plant life. The metaplane is scaffolding, containing layers of plant-like denizens. It is a verdurous metaplane. While the prime color is green, there

STILL MORE ASTRAL PHENOMENA

THE MIST

On June 21st, 2023, the Mist began to form in the land of Brittany, France. It is a dense and unusually obscuring fog. The Mist is unaffected by the surrounding weather and can easily appear on hot summer days or windy, rainy days. It made travel on the roads difficult even with radar as it gave off ghostly readings. Prolonged exposure gave rise to feelings of paranoia and uneasiness. It also has an astral signature, which makes even astral travel difficult through it. The Mist twists magic, making for a high background count, and it is attractive to several Awakened animals. At its height, it spanned the entire peninsula covering roughly four thousand square kilometers. After a few weeks, the disappearances began. Not only people who went into the fog, but whole towns were disappearing in the ebb and flow of the Mist. The government evacuated threatened areas while druids, shamans, and every magical group that the government could call in worked to figure out how to counter it. Not until October 31st, five years after the Mist formed, did the Druidic Revival of Brittany (Aznevezenti drouizel Breizh) manage to contain and dissipate the mist. While the ritual was mostly successful, patches of the mist still crop up. A semi-permanent patch of the Mist lies near Carnac, specifically the surrounding area of the standing stones. It is routinely removed by the druids, but after a few weeks or months, it reforms. Because of the threat of the mist, Brittany was given autonomy.

- Avoid evil mist that eats people. Check.
- Slamm-O!

- The mist could be part of a druidic conspiracy to gain territorial autonomy through the creation of a threat. Better than SOX, as it's controllable.
- Plan 9

- Wait, you're saying that SOX was planned?
- Bull

- Not entirely, but it did force the evacuation of many corporate facilities. There'd be enough paydata and technology for an AA corporation to move up a rank if they could collect it.
- Plan 9

is a myriad of variegated and flowering colors mixed in. While many are content to remain stationary and bask in the sun, contemplating philosophical questions, there are more mobile denizens such as the bract, which captures passing breezes and hunts the slime that drags itself along the underbrush to keep up with the movements of the sun. I was content to spend many hours illustrating several wondrous spirits that live here. Then there are Man-of-the-Woods, grama and Boscage; kami and manitous of the metaplane that take care of their brethren and children.

TRANQUIL GARDENS

This fractured metaplane contains manicured hedges and lawns with shaded stone paths. Small lakes and pools are astral shallows to scenes on the metaplane of man and the physical realm. Dreamers can attempt to break through these still waters to reach the Garden. The paths meander on through various relaxing spots in the garden for a traveler to rest.

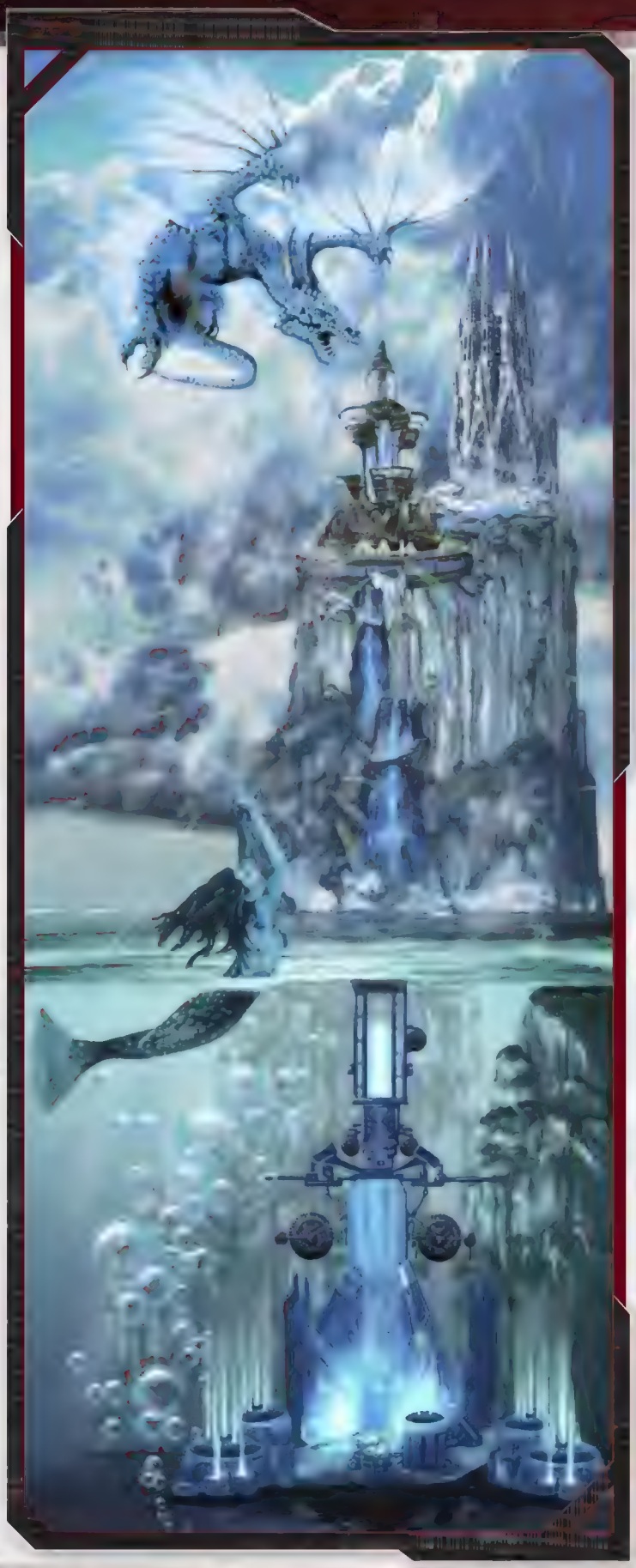
UMBRAGE

This is a hyper-metaplane consisting of a dense dark forest, which reflects old beliefs about nature. The thick-hedged boscage, giant sequoia, and various other spirits form a living palisade to prevent mages from entering, while also keeping the umbrage spirits from leaving. It took a bit of doing to find a way to enter those woods without violence. I finally had to resort to creating a visage of fear before the spirits of the palisade moved. Once you cross this living wall into the woods, the metaplane is illuminated by phosphorescent light and has the earthy odor of decomposition. Within Umbrage are diminutive, mushroom-like schrats and hairy wealds, who are humanoids living a primitive existence in this dark metaplane. These spirits do not appear to be the fearsome or mischievous creatures the rest of the metaplane fears, so there may be more toward the heart of the woods.

THE ELEMENTAL PLANE OF WATER

The Metaplane of Water has three physical worlds. The first is a deep ocean teeming with flora and fauna, from the tiny limnals whose pink bodies swarm around geysers to the immense balneals, massive enough to support cities of ice on their backs. Rising from the ocean are permanent geysers that support masses of ice. The balanced ice fields contain cities carved and grown from the chilly substance. Above the masses of ice are steaming vents to the clouds above. The clouds themselves form even more cities of condensed vapor that float along with the winds, tethered by the vents. The cloud cities shed particles of snow that help repeat the cyclic nature of the world. The sky is cast with brilliant rainbows as the omnipresent light is shattered and reflected

The metaplane of water has a rigid caste system, with the lowest order being in the ocean and the highest in the clouds. In the ocean is the ever-shifting shape of the undines, oceanic water spirits. They are transients and follow the currents wherever it takes them. They are carefree spirits



who would rather swim with the leaping hyetals and gather trills from the depths of the sea. Also occupying the sea are the vadose, who work the currents and weave shimmering machines beneath the sea that create the geysers holding up the great ice cities. Each city is balanced on at least three such columns with almost kilometer-thick ice that formed over the ages from freezing temperatures. This is the middle class, living in stark white buildings and translucent spires. The firns and neve are formed ice spirits who live up here; firns are squat, blue-tinted creatures, while the neve are tall and translucent. Some run the computational steam engines, like Bergy Stelzer, a jolly sort of water spirit who has a talent for shaping the proper gears. Others tend the waddling, domesticated ogive that feeds the cities.

From the Steam engines are the nebulous cities, home to the royal brumes and the upper class. The brumes are ghostly creatures who spend most of their time in contemplation. This also means they are occasionally absent minded and will drift with the winds watching the multi-winged eskers flutter from cloud to cloud. This is a hazard to the brumes if they aren't accompanied by neve or firns, for the greatest predator of them is the dragonesque Jökulhlaup. Jökulhlaup has great vaporous wings and glacial teeth that she displays while gliding over the elemental plane in search of food.

ELEMENTAL POLE OF WATER

In the far astral north, there is a large column of water capped by cylinder of ice. It slowly rotates on the winds that cross the astral sea from the elemental plane of air. A citadel is built at the top of the ice to house diplomats and ambassadors as well as an aquatic oubliette for prisoners. Just on the horizon, one could see the structure known as the crystal well from the citadel. Sjörå, with their mermaid like appearance, swim in these cold waters, providing hospitality.

Rain

Rain is a nebulous hyper-metaplane of constant showers falling on solid ground. Its denizens are diminutive drops of water. Their speech is the varying sounds made as their form impacts the ground. They usually speak and move collectively when dealing with outsiders.

Shore

Shore is a hyper-metaplane of an endless beach with the constant crashing of waves. The spirits move together as one, and their crashing dance and retreating hiss is their form of communication.

METAPLANE OF EARTH

The Metaplane of Earth is a solid, almost static landscape with sporadic geometric shapes and crystalline formations. There is no earthly blue sky, only the cold blackness of space illuminated dimly by distant suns and galactic gas. A ring of dust shines brilliantly through piezoelectric stress as it orbits the plane. The Metaplane of Earth is entropic.

Most things grow or fade at a geological pace. The mindset of spirits there matches this pace. Its denizens are not hasty to make decisions, and they are thoughtful in speech as if they had all the time in the metaverse. This is not to say they are slow; it's just that they have a different perspective on how things should flow into a greater pattern. Great cities sprawl out along the landscape in a full spectrum of colors; some sparkle like a grand gem in the light.

In the city of Amphibolite, the oldest city on the metaplane is a central tower of quartz grown over the eons by dedicated workers to well over a kilometer high. At its top is a council of gnomes, the earth spirit kind, who from this height scan the astral heavens with great crystal scopes to gain insight into future events. While most of the fauna are slow moving, like the tiny white argil in its geodesic shell and the magnificent moving hill of the marl, they all fear the fast-moving bole, which is a shifting sand form that slithers around most obstacles to grind down its prey.

Some of the flora and fauna are imperceptibly slow moving. The tiny white argil and its geodesic shell slowly rolls along at a steady pace looking for the next obsidian shard to grind down. The larger marl moves beneath the ground, breeching the horizon like a slowly growing hill. Though neither can outrun the bole; the hiss of this beast comes from the shifting sand-like body as it moves parallel to the ground. Argils perish quickly by the erosive bite of the bole, though it takes a pack of them to try to wear down the marls.

COUNTRY OF KAOL

The Country of Kaol lies high in the mountains. The kaolin resemble tall pale statues, some having an uncanny resemblance to metahumanity. They built pyramidal arcologies larger than the mountains themselves. Quartz timekeepers and piezoelectric lamps within the cities indicate an industrialized civilization. A religious order of kaolins strike special stones that resonate tones throughout the city signifying a call to order or in celebration of Isostasy, which is when balance is restored.

COUNTRY OF MIDDEN AND DRUMLIN

Midden and Drumlin are adjacent countries on a rich loam plain. They appear as chunky rocks, stacked in humanoid shaped forms, though the drumlins have a smoother

shape. Their cities are small circular huts within a larger ring of stone. They are growers of crystals and not fighters. They fear the predatory gabbros that dominate the country. Gabbros are sneaky enough to move through the terrain without disturbing a stone, yet large and strong enough to swallow a midden whole.

ARGILLACEOUS LANDS OF THE EAST

These lands are home to the gnomes, diminutive humanoids shaped from clay. The cities give the impression of sandcastles built by an ocean of mud. They are craftsmen and artisans who can spend years engraving a stone with intricate patterns. Sailing the ocean is the famous Captain Akrose and his iron freighter, the *Trilobite*. On seas of mud, the famous Captain Akrose circles the plane seeking treasure. He is like an avalanche in decision making compared to other earth spirits.

CITY OF AMPHIBOLITE

The oldest city on the metaplane, it is made of blocks of stone constructing rectangular-shaped buildings of various heights with a central tower of quartz grown and carefully shaped over the eons to over a kilometer in height. The city sprawls down over a hundred meters into a canyon, with terraced buildings and grand bridges to the canyon floor. Gnomes, midden, kaolin, and other various earth spirits inhabit the city. In the central tower, an aetherological group charts the movements of the heavens and the other metaplanes using mystically crafted lenses of crystal. It is said the city was the grain of sand around which the whole metaplane formed.

SOUTHERN POLE OF EARTH

Here the elemental plane of earth is cooked by high temperatures from the metaplane of fire, forging and cooling into metallic planes. Rolling hills of iron, copper, and other elements, freed of oxidizing agents abound here. A strong magnetic spike juts from the landscape as the southern pole. This place spawned the hyper-metaplane of Contraption, where the southern pole is worked and tooled into a great clockwork moon orbiting the pole with worker spirit cogs and robotic-looking spirits of earth partner on Contraption for some unknown plan. More disturbing is the perpetual dark side of Contraption, where monstrous constructions are momentarily silhouetted by the light of a forge or lightning storm.

METAPLANE OF FIRE

The Metaplane of Fire is a dynamic land of heat and light. Everything is consumed, re-spawned, and then consumed again in an endless cycle. The metaplane constantly moves; volcanoes erupt, landmasses crash, and seas boil. The metaplane is constantly aglow with energy. Solid land is sparse, floating on rivers of fire. Even in the heavens, a great yellow sun fills most of the sky.

Its denizens thrive on material that oxidizes or is crushed under pressure. They are equal in mentality and can change discussions or decisions as quickly as we blink. They are not irrational—far from it, in fact. Their logic follows the path of least resistance as long as there is fuel to burn. Traveling the ever-changing landscape are the gypsy-like ardors that passionately play ethereal music or move their flickering flame form to the thrumming pulse of the metaplane. More stationary are the cyclonic conflagrations of the imperial empryeans who have built floating basalt cities that shift with the magma flows. Leadership among the empryeans is short lived. To gain favor, a magician must court several spirits of royalty.

Some of the flora/fauna have short lifespans, like the mote, who live, breed, and die in a matter of seconds, leaving only a flash of light to present their existence. Reddish-orange, lizard-like salamanders swim in oceans of molten matter eating crystalline crustaceans, while bouncing balls of condensed gas incinerate the glowing fruit of the kindle. Suttee and phlogiston chase each other as predator and prey. Nothing is permanent in this metaplane, though some things take longer to be transformed.

THE ASH WASTES

This area is possibly hundreds of kilometers in diameter and is knee deep in fluffy black soot. The winds caused by the varying thermal dynamics appear to cancel each other out here, allowing them to release the heavy particles like a black rain over the land. Herds of phlogiston wade through the ash waste with their breath siphoning any calx that has blown in. Predatory suttee stalks the phlogiston with only their pointy ears visible above the ash, listening for sounds of movement. When it strikes, the suttee drives half-meter-long, red-hot claws into the belly of the prey in order to extract and consume the entrails.

THE GROVE OF KINDLING

These forests of tangled, ten-meter-tall trees are of a dense material ranging in hue from brown to black. The trees block the wind and do not catch fire; a respite from the rest of the metaplane. Each branch of the tree bears one to two glowing fruits. The fruits are heavy and hot to the touch. The kindle tree's fruit grow by fusion, slowly consuming the parent tree with nuclear energy over tens of thousands of years. When a kindle fruit is ready, it drops to the ground, melting the terrain as it sinks into the depths. Then with a great explosion, a dense fluid bursts into the sky to solidify into a new kindle tree, condensing further and bear new fruit.

MUSPELLHEIM

The inhabitants of this hyperplane are the Jotunn, six-meter-tall, humanoid giants living in stone fortresses

ONE MORE ASTRAL PHENOMENA

THE VEIL

While the Veil was a constructed phenomenon, it is not the only one. A natural occurrence of the Veil formed around the Haparanda Skärgård soon after the Euro wars. The appearance of a Veil is that of a heavy rain falling upwards roughly twenty meters in height with large swells forming at the edge. The top is covered with low clouds, which swirls within the boundary of the phenomenon. Both the clouds and rain obscure visibility. The Veil surrounds Tir na nÓg on all sides at a distance of twelve to eighteen meters with an average thickness of six hundred meters. The Haparanda zone is much smaller, but with a similar distance and thickness. Living creatures find themselves confused entering the Veil and are turned around, often exiting near the same point they entered. Ships on autopilot are only affected by the choppy waters and wind within the veil, but they can navigate through easily. In the Tir, however, they add additional electronic warfare and sensors to prevent unwanted visitors, however they may come. I won't get into Tir's security details as it's not part of the astral phenomenon, and also because sharing details about their security procedures has a way of attracting unwanted attention.

The Haparanda zone will spin off the occasional storm or abnormally high swells that can damage the mainland. Satellite imagery of the Veil over Haparanda and Tir na nÓg, reveals that while they both have a smooth clockwise spin, the Haparanda Veil is slightly off center and has a wobble of fifteen to twenty meters. This may explain the formation of storms. Since the Comet, the Tir na nÓg Veil has started wobbling about three to five meters from center along with occasional breaks in the barrier.

- This states that the veil can be ritually created. I wonder what the requirements are to build it. Does it have to be over water?
- Winterhawk

- What, create a veil for privatizing a swimming pool?
- Slamm-0!

THE ANCIENTS SHOULD HAVE USED WARNING LABELS

POSTED BY: ARETE

With all the recent activity with artifacts and Magister mentioning Dr Gordon's supposed Al Azif, I'd like to point out to all those Awakened that artifacts are not tools like foci. Some of their powers come at a price. The ancient civilizations who crafted them didn't add helpful warning labels like "Caution: May lose soul when used," let alone easy to use instructions. A perfect example is Timmy's clock.

Timmy's clock is a German-built grandfather clock supposedly constructed in the 15th or 16th century. While it appears to be able to tell time, behind the swinging pendulum is a plethora of gears like the Antikythera mechanism. Below the pendulum is a sphere carved with a map of the earth. We figure this device is the "canary in the coal mine" of magical events. Anytime a large magical event occurs, this device drops the pendulum onto the sphere and makes a mark on the globe where the event occurred. This also unfortunately disables the clock until someone fixes it. Timmy's clock has recorded accurately the Great Ghost Dance, the opening of the DeeCee Rift, and the Cermak Blast in Chicago. Timmy's clock has also reported to have recorded events in the past as well, though there's only one globe included, so we're not sure how this artifact works in absence of magic or to be frank how all those gears work in relation to magic at all.

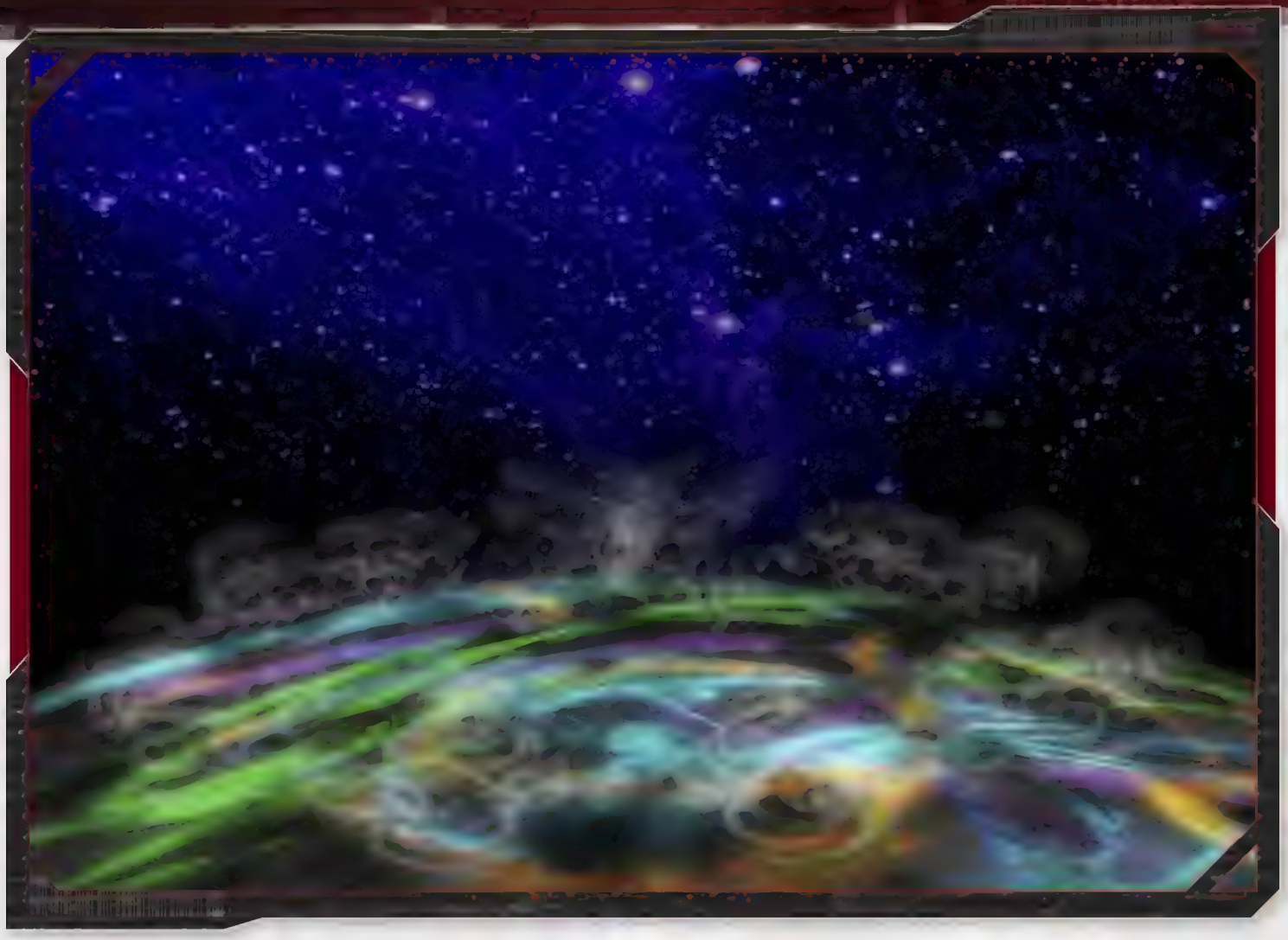
We call it Timmy's clock after Professor Tim Childs, who was the curator of the clock at Boston University in 2013 where it was housed. The day of the Great Ghost Dance, the clock chimed like it has never done before and scratched a mark on the globe approximately where Howling Coyote performed the ritual. Professor Childs was an early thaumaturgist from the local Masonic Lodge. He worked to get the clock working again—replacing gears, adjusting springs, etc. In his diary he wrote of finding magical signs and symbols on some of the gears. Going through all the parts he catalogued, he found some were from an earlier period prior to the proposed 15th century date of varying materials. When he put everything back as documented, he found not only did it not work, but it looked like there was a piece missing. The process of fixing the clock triggered some sort of madness—when he finally fixed the clock, adding the new gear, his long-term memory became shot. He couldn't remember much past the day he first fixed the clock. That was minor compared to the night terrors, childlike regression, and obsession with astrology he then developed. The Lodge brought him in and took care of him, and he was able to get the clock working without much effort after the three known events, but he passed away in 2069. Timmy's clock stopped once more in 2070 with a mark in the Mojave Desert. No one has tried to get the clock started again, fearing they will suffer the same fate as Timmy.

Another example is Gagnon's panopticon. From the same scripts that told stories of Penticlese, the Etruscans had named another, later artificer called Gagnon. Gagnon was a mythological blacksmith who would craft many wondrous artifacts. Gagnon had crafted twelve artifacts with one being Gagnon's panopticon. The panopticon artifact, when active, can find any of the other eleven artifacts in close proximity. The legend says that Gagnon was able to track down the warlords and villains around the Mediterranean Sea who destroyed his village and stole all of his creations with the panopticon. The panopticon looks like a good-sized cylinder with various holes and inset gemstones; it was found over a decade ago in Corsica.

Because not much was known of the other eleven artifacts, the panopticon has been stolen several times in the attempt to look for other artifacts, believing in the possibility that the Sextant of Worlds and Shantya's compass were created by Gagnon. This, however, wasn't the case. I myself procured it for a dig a few years ago. What wasn't mentioned in any of the texts was that the use of the panopticon causes blindness, both astrally and physically, as the magician's "mind's eye" is focused only on Gagnon's artifacts. That information would have been helpful when digging illegally. At least the blindness disappeared after a few months.

Worse, some of these artifacts have gained their own personalities, becoming inhabited by metaplanar creatures or developing a direct connection to some deep metaplanar creature. Magister mentions the Book of Gaf. There are actually four books, one for each Brother of Shadow. Gaf, Tak, Dru, and Obe were mythological demons worshipped by acolytes who would bestow upon them gifts of power and strength. The cost was sacrificing their neighbors in horrible ways.

To sum up: Do as much research on the artifact as possible before using it, and make sure someone can help you out if something goes wrong.



surrounded by a land constantly catching fire from volcanoes and lava fields. It has more of a resemblance to a hellish earth than the elemental plane. The Jotunn are ruled by Surt, whose sword glows as bright as the day it was forged.

METAPLANE OF AIR

This metaplane has no solidity. It's a swirling mass of colored gasses moving in various directions like a planetary gas giant. The defining edges are where this metaplane gets close to another. There are four poles, the cold elemental pole to the north next to Crystalwell, the hot pole in the south, the dry pole to the east and the wet pole to the west with the direction based on the astral compass. With the different values of temperature and moisture, winds form and swirl in various directions. Swirling, smoky shapes of vaguely human form are called the sylphs. Sylphs bend the winds to their will to create citadel eddies of denser air that move along the metaplanes. They do not linger in thought or place, nor do they brood over what happened in the past. They are sometimes viewed as omnipresent, though their speech may be hard to understand as the trains of thought behind the words are foreign to metahumans.

Fauna spirits, like the little welkins, bob along in the dense murky depths, siphoning contrails while wafts flutter higher from air pocket to air pocket. Neither is a match for the predatory zephyr. It shears through the atmosphere and kills with its vitriolic teeth. One of the great dangers with traveling this metaplane is encountering an unseen simoon. Travelers would not know they were engulfed by a simoon until its breath poisons their mind with despair and dark thoughts. Elsewhere in the metaplane, denizens like the Prana and Vayu build super fluidic highways connecting ever-changing sprawls of residents, the Poles, and a central octahedron.

THE OCTAHEDRON

The Metaplane of Air is vast with swirling streams of colors. The plane, like its denizens, can move in any direction, sometimes all at once. Some spirits are scattered in thought with lofty ideals, other are more focused in

one direction, though this all depends on which way the wind is blowing. It is with this mindset, Queen Candelia, a stationary whirlwind that often looks like either a dragon or a lion or something in between the two, rules over the Octahedron. An army of eunuch punkah serves the queen and maintains her palace. While steadier in thought than some other spirits, her mood can change quickly. Lord Vendaval supports her rule with a military presence of many spirits. The only force Candelia defers to is Sigh-on-Wind, the great mediator to the north.

Spirits from this metaplane are often vague in appearance, ranging from the swirling smoke-shaped sylphs, who bend wind to their will, to the heat shimmer of the khamsin warriors or the predatory zephyr with fast flight and vitriolic teeth. Others appear more solid, such as the colder fog form of mistral soldiers or the puffy cloud-like indentured punkahs.

THE SOUTHERN POLE OF AIR

The Southern Pole is marked with a second sun, a glow from the elemental plane of fire. The shimmering city of Tramontane is ruled by the violent khamsin. With whirling blades containing true fire and riding the powerful errhine, khamsin skirmishers protect the plane from intruders and are not fond of magicians who try to summon them. Herds of wild errhine roam the southern half of the metaplane, and inhabitants tend to get out of the way when they hear their thundering movements.

THE EASTERN POLE OF AIR

The Eastern Pole is marked by a floating island of eluvium and true earth, blown in from the elemental plane of earth. Built on both sides is the city of Foehn. The spirits here are gentle and laid back as they raise herds of bise on flatus fields that grow on the island. Dust devils are an occasional nuisance as they sweep tables of meals and fly off with the pilfering.

THE NORTHERN POLE OF AIR

Besides the Crystalwell are dangerous silap inua, dangerous beasts who take advantage of the mixing of elements of air and water to prey on travelers with confusing

blizzards. The boreas, natives to the north, hunts silaps as big game. Knik, one of the best borea trackers, resides at Crystalwell to help find lost magicians or ambassadors.

CORIOLIS

This hyper-metaplane has an earthlike ground with a swirling miasma in the heavens. A variety of storm spirits have established dominance on this metaplane. Tornadoes, typhoons, cyclones, storm wraiths, hurricane, and other storm spirits have become restless without anyone else to challenge them, and have divided up the land with lofty goals of dominating the metaplane over all other storms. No war has occurred as an unseen force continually grows faux buildings and forests upon the earth to keep the spirits' destructive nature occupied.

PLANE OF DEATH

The only metaplane the living can't go, until the end. Assuming, of course, you believe it is the actual final resting place of human spirits, rather than some metaplanar riff on that theme. The astral sea ends here in a flat mirrored floor of black that reflects the stars in the heavens. There are many hyper and bubble metaplanes that form from the Plane of Death, but they are isolated and do not disturb the aesthetics of this metaplane. The ambient light dims as one crosses over to this metaplane. The click of garuda's nails echoed oddly, though there's nothing visible that the sound can bounce off of.

ONE MORE ASTRAL PHENOMENA JUST CAME TO MIND

FOVEAE

Foveae are invisible tornadoes ranging from a few meters to one to two kilometers in diameter. They are silent killers of dual-natured entities and astral beings, as the center of foveae lacks mana energy. Astrally, it appears as a dark swirling vortex that reduces the magical energies around it, while physically it can be noticed as a distortion of the air like astral spirits. Fovae have been documented in Atzlan, UCAS near Chicago, and SOX. They are caused by high mana differentials from either heavy contamination or manipulation. Foveae move like storms, though they are difficult to predict as there's no effective way to track all of the mana energies and flows. They are often temporary, lasting only until the balance of magical energies is restored, though they often stay in place long enough to damage both the physical and astral plane.

- I wouldn't be surprised if Los Angles gets an occasional foveae running through with all the problems and overworked magic there.
- Winterhawk

WELL OF SOULS

On this metaplane is a Neolithic Stonehenge. At the center of the circle is a worn circular stone cap, which bleeds red and black light at the edges. Even without removing the cap, there is a feeling of fear and anguish that washes over those close to the well.

- If the living can't go there, then how did he get there? Is this another "ignorance is bliss" question?
- Mika

METAPLANE OF SHADOWS

The border to the shadow metaplane is apparent with the glowing omnipresent light being blotted out by some unseen object leaving only a few strange constellations to travel by. The shadow metaplane is a pale, mirrored mockery of the physical world with muted colored structures dotting the landscape. Light is never bright here, but there is enough to cast shadows. Orbiting the plane are four moons, hyper-metaplanes, which are noticeable by the stars they obscure. Great wing-shaped airships travel between the metaplane and its moons. Shades, shadows, wraiths, nightmares, wights, and other cultural bogeymen call this plane home. An interesting property of this metaplane is that the bogeymen here do not cast shadows. Their interest in metahumanity ranges from simple malicious manipulation of metahumans for their own inhuman pleasure to a burning hatred of metahumanity and feeding off suffering and pain. Shadow spirits do not care for other spirits and will take advantage of them as they will any metahumans. They also rarely work together, citing selfish tendencies and competition, but there are some who will trade off victims like currency to others once they're done. A victim of a succubus, for example, can become the perfect meal for a shade. Many of these shadow spirits have the Energy Drain (Karma) power, but the emotion of the victim in order for the shadow to feed is unique to the different classifications of shadow spirits. Shadow spirits often use Compulsion or similar powers to push the intended victim into an emotional or physical state from which it can feed off of the victim. Shadows have been found in the Sixth World as free or wild spirits and are surprisingly abundant considering magicians are not capable of summoning them.

MOONS OVER THE SHADOW METAPLANE

BLACK MOON

The largest moon in the heavens is the Black Moon. This moon is cracked and appears be constantly eclipsed by its three brothers. The deep crevasses are carved with endless flights of stairs, which descend to windowless

chambers and entrances to dark labyrinths. Its denizens work beneath the moon, forging and crafting infernal machines that occasionally arc plasma into the night sky. The Black Moon is home to the Great Spirit Gaf.

BLOOD MOON

The second largest moon is called the Blood Moon, since it glows faintly red like a burning ember. Ash from a thousand fires burn with carnal offerings in obsidian temples, and seams of coal perpetually smolder in vast rivers along the surface, giving the moon its color and a constant haze. Its denizens wear hideous masks as they travel in the choking smoke to the temples where they sacrifice other astral creatures to the Outer Gods. The Blood Moon is home to the Great Spirit Tak.

PALE MOON

The third moon is called the Pale Moon as its ghostly white surface is phosphorescent and glows by starlight. The moon is covered with a sea of endless bones to unknown depths. Cities dot the moon connected by a web of rails, giving it an appearance of stitches across corporeal flesh. Steam-powered vehicles scream along the tracks avoiding the unseen grumms and other things that swim within that sea. The Pale Moon is home to the Great Spirit Dru.

WILD MOON

The fourth moon is called the Wild Moon, and it is the smallest. Its dense black jungle gives it a glossy wet look. It is primitive compared to the other moons, having only one large city where ships trade with creatures like the cannibalistic ver to the other moons and the rest of the Shadow Plane. The denizens of this world wear masks of black teak and glowing multicolored phosphorescent tribal paints and live in dark huts beneath the canopy that keeps the ground in perpetual night. Snatchers and the Great Spirit Obe call this place home.

- Great ghost story!
- Slamm-0!

- Too bad that that the monsters he talks about really exist.
- Ethernaut

THE BOOKS OF SHADOW

The great spirits Gaf, Tak, Dru, and Obe are rumored to have all made appearances on Earth at one time or another and gathered a following both there and on the shadow metaplane. While on Earth, their followers wrote books on the deeds of these great sprits, how to call them, and what gifts they can bestow. Defying the passage of time and the rise and fall of cults, these books or portions thereof have been found. Two of them are in the hands of the Aleph Society.

The first one found was a palm-sized book with a cover made of beaten orchalicum. It is of undetermined age, though assumed to be an original between 10,000 and 20,000 years old. In cuneiform script it is named The Book of Gaf. The second one is of a later time with an age between 3,000 to 3,500 years old. It is an obvious copy in Mesoamerican hieroglyphs on wood and only contains a portion of information that the Book of Gaf contains. This book is titled Book of Tak.

DESH'VEROI, LAND OF DEMONS

The astral sea ends at primordial world comprised of a multitude of landscapes slowly being fused together and transformed. A scorched forested hillside is squeezed between an industrial-looking city block with round doors and a trash dumpsite complete with Earth-like bulldozers. The edges between the sections bubble up a grey ooze that hisses with heat as they continue to collide. From the hillside there are thousands of landmasses in a chaotic collection within the metaplane.

The denizens of this patchwork plain have little natural physical form. They are thick incorporeal vapors that emanate from the grey ooze and float along the landscape. There are three of these types of creatures: one type infuses deceased astral creature flesh to become corporeal and animate the remains; the second can infuse machinery and puppet the mechanical monster; the third, more subtle, can infuse magical items and manipulate the powers within. These were called the shedim, gremlins, and imps—demons with no form of their own, so they steal what they can. They are pathetic whispers of life without substance. The whole land itself is pieces of other metaplanes ripped from their existence and added here by the colossal nephilum, whose size and form I can only imagine.

Far beyond the grey sea are stark obsidian-and-onyx mountains; assumed to be the original or final look of the Desh'Veroi. Inhabiting the mountains are the winged ghasts, whose deathly silence comes from the fact that they have no faces, only a series of ridged horns. They hunt whatever they can in the valleys below using unnatural senses.

ROGGOTH'SHOTH, LAND BEYOND DEATH

Far into the depths of the deep metaplanes, farther than even the hive and Desh'Veroi, there is a metaplane where the Astral Sea becomes a black desert with slowly moving dunes under a night sky. Some may say this is the metaplane of purgatory. They could be right. It is deathly quiet and mostly devoid of distinct features.

THE TOWER

The Tower is a black, basalt needle some two hundred meters wide and five hundred meters tall. There are no windows or doors save for an open temple structure on top. Green fire burns from braziers surrounding ritualistic symbols carved into the floor with an uncomfortably familiar humanoid-shaped depression. A staircase from the temple descends into the depths of the tower. Along the hallways hang metahuman heads and hearts accentuating barbed hooks within alcoves. The semi-translucent heads whisper, ramble, and scream incoherently to the echoing beat from a myriad hearts. Bestial monks in saffron robes are the caretakers of these bodiless guests. The monks croon songs of an unknown language, caress cheeks, and pour strange ichors to alter the rhythms of the heart. I do not know these people, nor do they perceive my presence.

THE VAULT

The Vault is out in the desert as a circular stone wall keeping the dunes at bay. Within the wall are flagstones with unknown runes in a spoke pattern around a central four-meter-diameter stone door in the earth. Below the door is a network of catacombs illuminated by ghostly white fungus. The passageways are equal in size to the door above. Rooms branch off into recognizable sleeping and eating chambers. Those are the good rooms; others are better left forgotten. A large in the heart of the labyrinth, the inhabitants chant and prostrate towards a silver mirror, whose depths only show inky blackness save for two red orbs. The inhabitants are large, gorilla-like creatures with sharp curved horns on their head. They are known as the vrygoths

ANCIENT WIZARD PENTICLESE

I found a cross reference Roggoth'shoth in the DF database to some ancient wizard called Penticlese. Legend has it that he created an artifact, a tome that could bridge the gap to this metaplane to summon such creatures. Peniclese is almost a myth by the time he was written about by Etruscan historians. He was a wizard in ancient times when doors to the underworld were open and the sky was filled with horrors (if you believe that nonsense). This is where DF got most of their information with some tags to relatively current references from police reports.

Henry's Old Coat

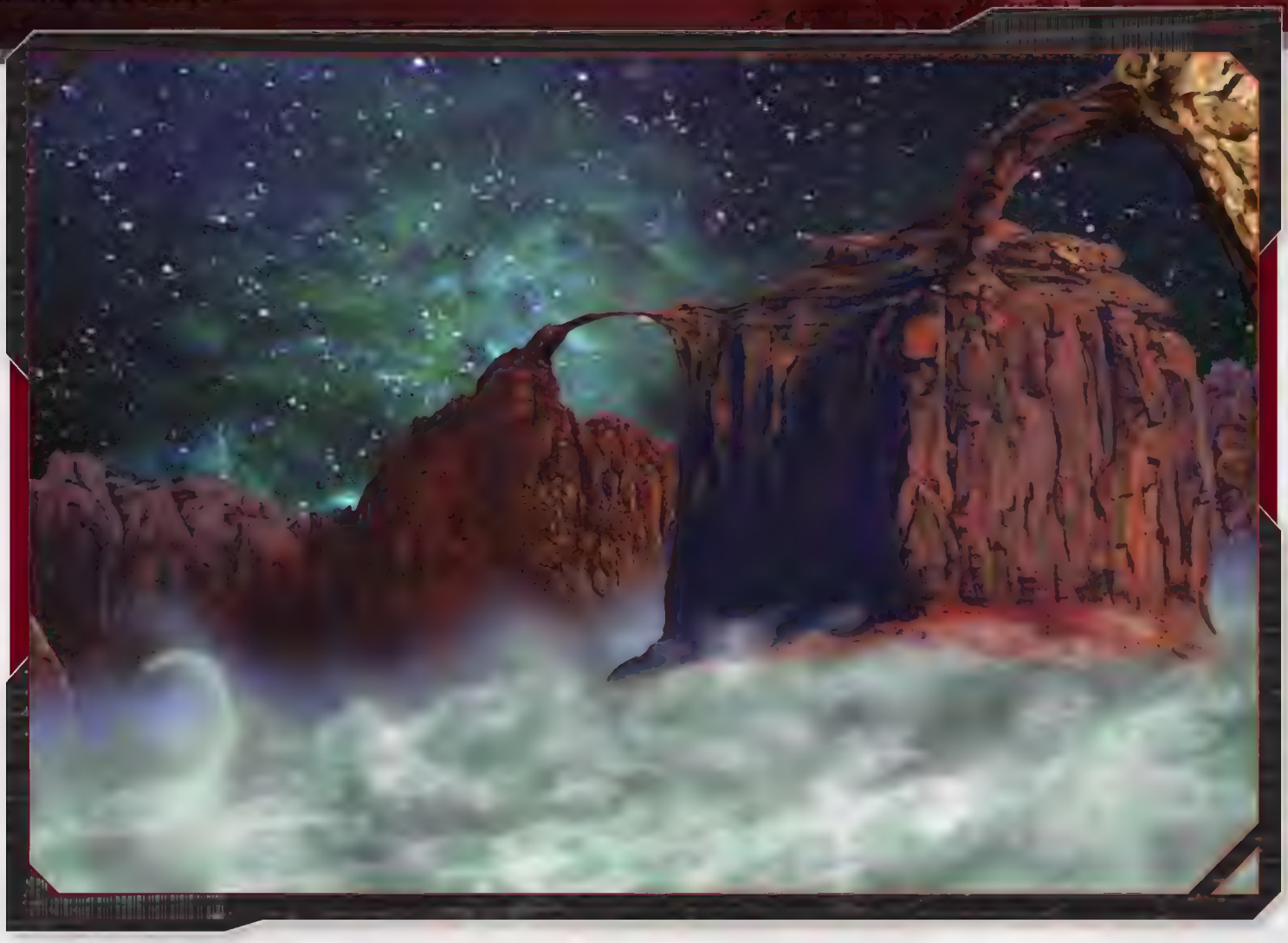
I am tired. I got up this morning and felt the stiffness in my joints. I know I'm nearing the end. I've been living in the retirement home for three months. The caregivers of Helping Hands have been nice, but nothing they can do could actually help me.

The retirement home was supposed to be only temporary, for a few days before moving on, but then I met Peter and little Henry. Peter and little Henry were Henry's son and grandson, but I didn't recognize them. Peter talked to me gently. He explained to me about the progressive Alzheimer's disease and sounded like he's said this before. Little Henry was eight. He wanted his grandpa to play games with him and I obliged. Granted I wasn't good at some of the games, but Peter and little Henry were pleased that I even tried. They only stayed for an hour but promised to come back tomorrow. I nodded my head as they left. Afterwards I walked around. It was a place with many residents in various states of decay. No one would bother him here; on the contrary, the staffs have taken steps to make sure he was comfortable and well fed. So I stayed.

It became enjoyable to see Peter and little Henry as they stopped by a few times a week. Peter was surprised that I could remember their names that second week. I didn't have a good explanation for him other than guessing it was the food. As I got to know them, I started feeling regret that I didn't know them earlier. Peter was good enough to fill in the blanks where my memory failed. Henry was a good engineer for Federated Boeing. He was there for forty years before retiring. He was a good father and husband, but his wife died five years ago. Her loss accelerated Henry's mental deterioration. I feel sadness in not knowing her. After the first month, Peter took me for drives out of the retirement home. He was pleased that my memory has improved. He confided that he was worried that I would not be able to remember little Henry and that his son would only know his grandfather as an invalid, not the man who put engines on planes to make them fly.

In between the visits I looked into Henry's life. It was a mess, or at least the latter half was. The man's thoughts were scattered. His death would leave nothing for Peter. His Will appeared to have changed multiple times and while Peter had power of attorney, I don't think that Peter had the heart to check on his father's finances. I don't know why I felt angered people would take advantage of Henry. I made the changes that I could.

Seven a.m. and the stiffness wasn't going away. I look down at the old hands that played checkers with the young boy and feel sadness. I won't be able to play any more games. Finding a memo pad I write to Peter, thanking him for the memories and tell little Henry not to cry. I tidy up the room and lay down on the bed. In moments, I shook off the old body of Henry. Manifesting above his peaceful body, my thoughts fade back to more ethereal ways, but I'm surprised at the emotional bond I retain with Peter and little Henry. I fell back into the astral plane and seek out new habitation and wonder where it will take me...



AZZORLOTH, THE BRIDGE BETWEEN WORLDS

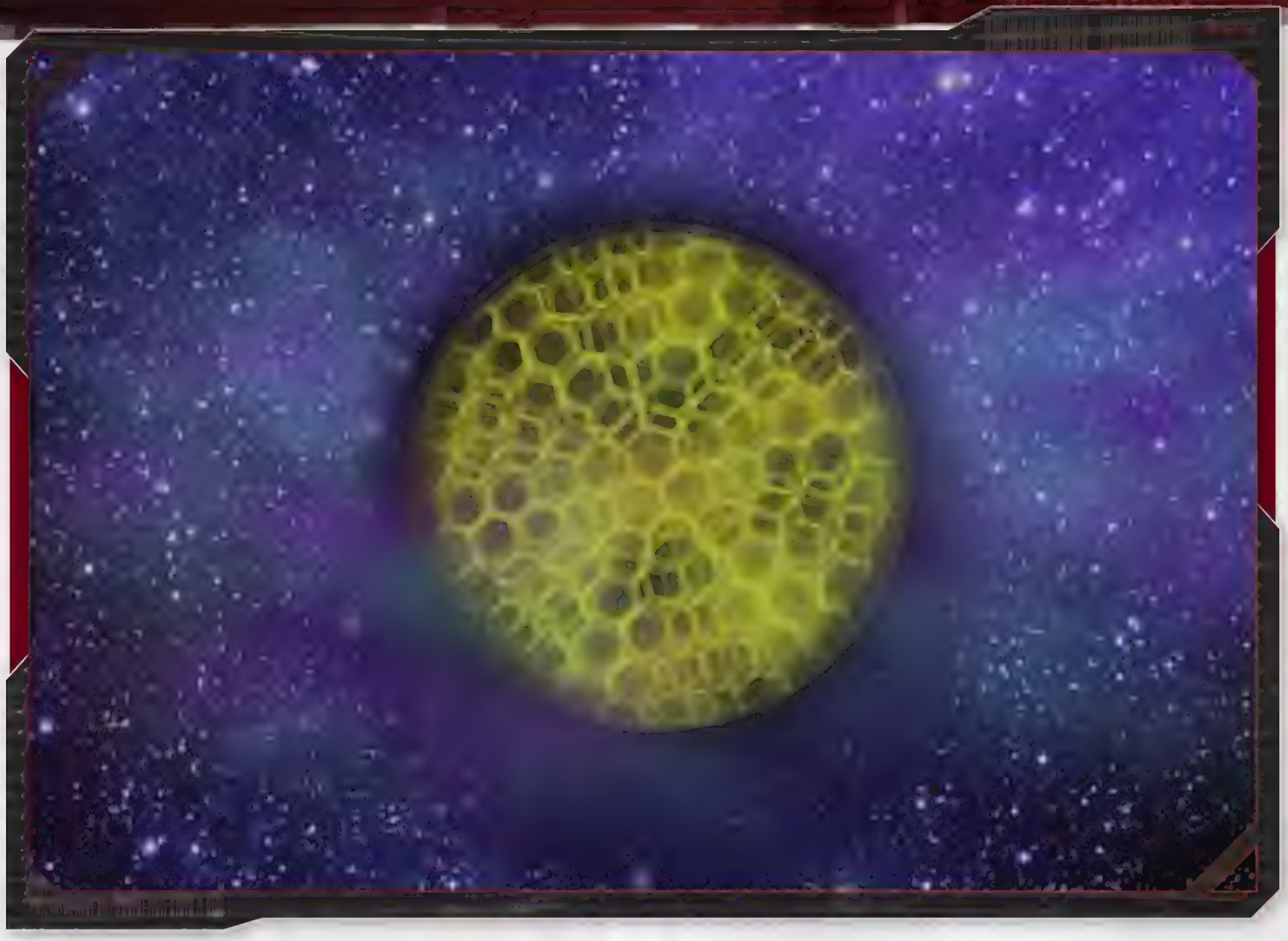
As I travelled further into the astral sea, I find my way is barred by a vast chasm. Sand from the astral sea blow out over it, creating a haze that makes seeing the bottom impossible. Assuming there is a bottom. The droning hiss of sand blowing around is the only sound I can hear. I stop for a moment to recheck the charts. The maps do not show this rift, nor is there any mention of such a hazard out on the astral sea. Garuda and I traveled along the edge for some time looking for an end.

Looking across to the other side, I cannot hazard a guess as to the distance, but there is a fog or atmospheric blur that obscures any details. Occasionally I see something moving, like the shadow of a pacing animal, but nothing definitive. At this distance, seeing shadows, one might believe that it is a huge beast the size of the astral crab, but it could also be more distortions caused by the shifting sand. This trench does not appear to be unnaturally straight, but varies like the ripped edge of a paper, though it does not waver much.

I would have liked to have seen the cities of Yith, but I do not see this chasm ending. After what seems like an hour, an outcropping of stone, roughly fifteen meters high, rises up out of the sand. This mound of stone is irregular, maybe thirty meters across. From it there seems to be some structure jutting over the chasm, maybe another thirty meters; with Garuda's help, we made it to the top of the stone. The center area is flat, maybe twenty meters wide and continues this way as a stone bridge over the rift. I walk out to the edge and find it very jagged and broken. Looking out, there seems to be a similar outcropping. Looking at the bridge and the chasm, I doubt I'll be able to find migo or any other deep metaplanar spaces as marked on the chart in this area. Coming back down, I step on what appears to be bone, buried in the sand. Looking around, I find a dozen or so more. They could be human, or at least humanoid. Seeing this I wonder what else is hidden beneath the sand.

- Through all of this I haven't heard one peep from Plan 9. I'd have thought he'd be all over this.
- Slamm-0!

- Just taking notes.
- Plan 9



- Oh Lord.
- Bull

VHORTAS (THE HIVE)

The Hive is a sickly yellow sphere floating in the astral sea. Multiple, semi-translucent hyper-metaplanes are incorporated into the Hive like layers of an onion. Each hyper-metaplane is a densely packed catacomb for one insect spirit species. The constant buzz and chirps within the dark tunnels is maddening as it echoes across all the hyper-metaplanes. I have figured that there are at least thirty distinct hyper-metaplanes correlating to a form of insect with numerous fractured and derivative hyper-metaplanes on each. Countless workers and soldiers move along them, competing for food, space and dominance. They war with everyone including themselves. The dead are never mourned; they are consumed by whoever finds them, friend or foe. The original metaplane that the hyperplanes manifested from is barren and lifeless; consumed by a common ancestor, the Invae. Whether it was an evolution or devolution, the Invae developed various permutations of itself possibly to help in surviving. This diversity probably also caused the warring among themselves. While fractured and chaotic rule among various queens and "mother" spirits, the denizens of the hive still collectively call themselves Invae while referring to their home as Vhortas.

METABELES (THE WEB)

Even before reaching this metaplane, long ethereal tendrils of a web, extend out into the astral sea. Here on this metaplane are lofty sails of spidersilk that dwarf the mountains below. Aranea, scorpius, and like spirits inhabit this metaplane. They have a cunning and calculating intelligence, which they employ in weaving gossamer palaces to host guests and elaborate mazes for the unwanted. There are three rulers to this metaplane; Eater of Insects, Hoarder of Secrets, and Trickster.

THE WARRIOR PLAINS

This lightly forested land is littered with chitinous armor from many insects. This is the battle ground for the great warrior spirit, Eater of Insects, and his army of Tsuchigumo warriors. Ages ago, the Invae attempted to colo-

ANOTHER COOL ASTRAL PHENOMENA

VOIDS

In around the same locations as the Foveae are voids. They are stationary gaps in the astral space where no mana exists. SOX is the most dangerous, as one percent of the SOX containment area is a void.

- The voids have many names, especially in the SOX. The French call them Gouffres, which means "chasms," the Germans call them Kaulen, the Saarlandean term for "holes," or Nullzonen. Zip is common among glowpunks, but these are just the most popular.
- Ethernaut

Voids go beyond mana ebbs where threads of magic still exist. These areas are so deprived of mana that even when it's introduced it loses cohesion and diffuses into the aether. Voids are normal in space, as it's one large void, away from the biosphere and the emotional content of metahumanity, but because of pollution and crazy use of magic, voids have occurred more frequently on Earth.

The largest and possibly oldest known void is that of Cattenom. It is assumed this void came into existence a few years after the GAU disaster of '09, during the Awakening. Without any records or measurements we don't know if it grew to its current size or if there were any other forces helping form the void. What we do know is that the Cattenom Void is roughly six kilometers in diameter centered over the nuclear facility and has not moved nor changed size since its discovery. Foveae, most likely caused by the Crash warhead of '64, wander around the Cattenom void like small storms. These foveae do not wander far, so it is likely some astral/special phenomenon attracts the storms to the void.

- I've seen it once from a distance of several kilometers, and I still shiver at the mere thought. It's staring into the abyss, watching a black pool of the infinite trying to absorb you. Astral space bent at the edges of it.
- Ethernaut

REMEMBERING CARLOS

Carlos woke in a cold sweat. A dim red light came through a window, discoloring the natural look of the room. He couldn't remember where he was. Electronic devices sat dark next to the bed. The bed was Spartan and had rails. It took him a few moments to regain his senses to remember it was Jackson's Community Hospital. By the appearance of the world through a small, lime-stained window, the sun was setting. It would be dark soon. He stumbled around the room in the remaining light and found a bag of clothes, most likely his, at the foot of the bed. As Carlos changed, he had time to reflect on the last few days. The plague was on the news on every channel. When it hit Jackson, people were already stockpiling, like a storm was coming. The CDC and National Guard came, separating the sick from the healthy and bussing them to some other location. CDC asked for volunteers to set up a command center while they evacuated the healthy. Carlos volunteered, since he was an electrical engineer and had worked on the town's municipal buildings. Only hours after he got the CDC set up, he start feeling sick. His wife didn't want to leave him, but he didn't want her right there in the middle of everything. They agreed she could go and wait at her father's ranch. Everything that happened after that was hazy with fever.

He slowly got dressed as the sun disappeared from the window. Opening the door to the hall outside the room, he saw the green glow of the exit signs. He waited a few moments as his eyes adjusted before leaving. It was a mess; trash and gurneys filled the halls. No one was around. It looked like the CDC had evacuated the town. As he walked down the hall, Carlos noticed black symbols painted on the room doors. He opened one, only to be assaulted by the putrid stench of death. Thankfully the dim light in the hall didn't spread far into the room. He figured the lumps in the beds were people; he had no idea if they were anyone he knew. Closing the door, he realized the symbols were accompanied by a number. This room had a four, another further down, two; across the hall was a seven. How many people in Jackson died? Carlos had initially thought plague was bad, but not fatal. He might have underestimated it.

He finally got to the lobby. There were more bodies, lying ungainly and ignored. Some looked like they had simply plopped down and waited for death to arrive. Carlos stepped over the bodies and found that the front door was locked. His throat constricted, his vision narrowed, and all he could see were the handles his hands gripped. He shook, and shook, and shook them, but got nothing. Then he turned and grabbed a nearby chair and used it to hit the door several times. What seemed like minutes passed before he broke the glass enough to get through. He crashed through with the chair, stumbling in the parking area of the hospital. He felt the glass scratch his face as he exited.

The cloudless night allowed the moon to provide light. It looked like the only source of light in the town. Everyone was gone. He thought about how far it was to the ranch, how long it would take to get there, and whether his wife and kids would still be there when he arrived. Would they be able to wait? He had to find out.

He ran down the street, looking at every car, trying to see if it would open. Desperation overwhelmed him after half an hour, and he picked up a rock and smashed the driver's window. Inside the car, he hot-wired the ignition, using the knowledge swapped among peers in the back row of a high school automotive education class. He drove away from town toward the ranch. The radio was nothing but static hiss.

He raced down the road, barely acknowledging the few roadblocks and cars on the side of the road. Almost an hour passed before he reached the ranch. There appeared to be a light on in the house. He drove up the driveway and ran up to the door. He banged on it, shouting his wife's name. No one answered. He remembered the hiding place for the key and opened the door. It didn't seem like the house was abandoned—it even smelled like dinner was cooking and almost ready. He ran into the living room to the sound of a woman screaming. It was his wife. She was hysterical, pointing a gun at him. He tried to tell her that it was him, Carlos, but she only shook her head and ran. She fled the living room through the kitchen to another hall. He was going to follow her, but saw a gaunt figure in the mirror on the wall. It was pale with sparse patches of hair. Its hands had long, rough fingers ending in crooked nails. It was wearing his cloths. He stared at its intelligent eyes for a long moment until a milky cloud coalesced over them, leaving him blind.

nize this metaplane, only to find very capable spirits like themselves. Eater of Insects led the counterattack against the Invae. The Invae attempted to hide in dark caves, only to find Theolyph and his tribe hungry for prey. The Invae attempted to escape into the desert only to be trapped between the solifuge and scorpius nations, whose cities hide within the dunes. As the Invae retreated, the gates they created were forced to remain open with woven rings. Pits, labyrinths, and nets dot the warrior plains as the Eater of Insects's army waits to hunt more Invae intruders. There have been dangers with this strategy, with more dangerous Invae coming through as well as the berserker madness that sometimes takes over a warrior as he/she travels alone through the gateway to hunt.

THE PALACE OF WHISPERS

High up in the mountains is a great structure, suspended between the mountain peaks. As the wind blows, the silken threads that make up much of it vibrate, composing a haunting acoustic melody. It has lost much of its transparency from eons of wind-born dust. Sitting on a throne of scrolls is the Empress Neit, Hoarder of Secrets. Radiating from the throne are thousands of magical threads that repeat to her whispered words that the wind has blown into the mountains. Hardly any rumor or information passed on these metaplanes escapes her. Easily bored of conversation, she also has a hobby of collecting and preserving relics and items. Every morning, servants drag great nets through the astral sea, hoping to bring trinkets to their empress to keep her pleased. These items she cocoons in special cords that ward off the effects of time and entropy.

THE HOUSE ARACHNE

Trickster is known by other names, including Anansi and Iktomi. Trickster has an identical twin brother, Meth, and together they live beneath the great canopy in a sparkling web, giving council and guidance. Iktomi and Meth travel to other metaplanes, unlike Neit and the Eater of Insects, who wait for things to come to them. While both are called tricksters, Iktomi's work is more benevolent while Meth's actions are malevolent

THE TWISTED WEB

This hyper-metaplane was long abandoned until fairly recently. Meth somehow escaped imprisonment and returned to his home plane and is now manipulating it to suit his desires.

GREATER BEINGS IN ASTRAL SPACE

We thought we were all powerful beings, capable of controlling our world and places beyond in space. Then

the Sixth World emerged, shattering that conception. We found spirit creatures beyond the astral. They were strange and powerful. To compensate we learned to control them and make them do our bidding. Then we found even more spirits coming to our world, beings that cannot be summoned, cannot be bound. Entities that threaten our existence. We build ugly weapons that poison the astral plane, preventing magic from being used and killing these spirits. I wonder—if there were other spirits out there, beings so powerful that they can form whole worlds, how would we react? Would we be respectful, even worshipful? Or would we fall into old habits and attempt to control or kill them?

There are legendary creatures described in the *Al Azif,* beings living between worlds. They have no known true form. They also have many names from different metaplanes and traditions, but I name them here by their common titles; The Dweller on the Threshold, The Violet Gas, and the Hungry Void.

DWELLER ON THE THRESHOLD

The Dweller sits in the space between our physical world and the metaplanes. Any magician who attempts to reach the metaplanes through normal means or, on some occasions, higher learning will encounter The Dweller. The Dweller has no set form, varying in appearance and attitude from meeting to meeting. The Dweller also knows everything about an astral traveler: every crime, secret, alias, numbered bank account—everything.

The Dweller is able to form his own bubble metaplanes in which he challenges the magician's character. Once the magician completes the challenge, the Dweller can bestow arcane knowledge or allow the magician to continue on. I cannot say that the Dweller is benevolent, because it has no interest in stopping bugs or other beings from coming to and from Earth. Nor can I say that it's malevolent, as it ha provided higher learning into the metamagics. I also haven't figured out why it only concerns itself with our Gaiasphere.

THE HUNGRY VOID

The Hungry Void is a seemingly mindless predator compared to The Dweller on the Threshold. It has created one single metaplane. Here it rules and is imprisoned, a Daemon-Sultan who sits on his midnight throne in the heart of the void. I have seen the Hungry Void from the Astral Sea. It is a vast blackness in the sky with a single red "star" representing the metaplane. I have no intent of attempting to travel there.

I have read that spirits who pass through The Hungry Void become trapped and then transformed by the Daemon-Sultan as he feeds pieces of it to the void. These twisted shells of spirits do the sultan's bidding with the

construction of colossal monument and the playing of music to his amusement.

I do not know how this parasitic relationship began, but in the city of Amphibolite, down in the archives of the great library, there is a story of cult followers of the first Daemon-Sultan and his crusade to build and rule his own metaplane. No metaplane was strong enough to defeat him as his power twisted his enemies into his allies. The Great Light, as the Hungry Void was called then, took it on itself to stop the Daemon-Sultan. It engulfed the cult followers and the Daemon-Sultan, forming a permanent bubble metaplane from which they could not escape. This, though, became a death sentence for the Great Light as the Daemon-Sultan's power poisoned it. The Great Light dimmed and darkened, becoming the Hungry Void. Things became even more twisted when some of the cultists escaped the reach of the Great Light/Hungry Void and found ways to communicate to their leader, providing more information on how it could twist and distort things to its own ends.

THE VIOLET GAS

Off into the Astral Sea, away from Azzorloth, is a metaplane void of tangible substance. It consists of violet-colored gas illuminated by the stars in the heavens. Here is assumed to be the creation from the one called the Violet Gas. The Violet Gas is old and rarely gives an audience. Its motives are as cryptic as The Dweller on the Threshold though it is less interested in humanity. *Al Azif* gives the true name of the Violet Gas, and that is what I used to get its attention. Finding myself floating among the stars was unnerving, but seeing the forms of the Violet Gas and getting some of my questions answered, cryptic though those answers may be, was worth the effort.

DEEP METAPLANES

Reaching the deep metaplanes can be achieved by traveling the astral sea as any other metaplane, though the more time I spend there, the more I ponder the dangers of this method of travel. In the distance I've seen caverns or sink holes in the sand. I've also walked along small sec-

tions of cobblestones and a field of dead grass within the astral sea. I wonder if no one bothers me because I'm like an ant among giants. Or is it the amulet from Zheng He's eighth voyage that somehow masks my presence?

When entering the deep metaplanes, there is a noticeable change in the ambient light and navigational "stars," as new lights appear at the horizon. This change may be tied to evanescent properties that spirits from these metaplanes suffer from. Also from the charts, there seems to be a discrepancy in relative distance. It appears I arrived at the terminus earlier than what the book had described. It may be my translation is inaccurate.

WE JUST REMEMBERED ANOTHER ASTRAL PHENOMENA

MAYA CLOUD

The Maya Cloud was one of the first, if not the first, of the great magical mysteries that emerged at the beginning of the Sixth World. In fact it may have manifested before the Awakening, but magic was poorly understood at that point. Between March and October of 2011, there were the beginnings of unexplained disruptions of electronic equipment and communications, rumors of strange things appearing and disappearing like ghosts, and geological changes that formed over days instead of decades. With the Chinese military massing on Tibet mid-October of 2011, things finally clicked astrally and like a pyroclastic cloud, a massive wall of white rolled right over the Tibetan plateau, roughly to the border's edge, right in front of the army. It was seventy-five to one hundred kilometers-thick dome more than five million square kilometers wide and topping three thousand kilometers in height. "Maya" is a Sanskrit word meaning "illusion." Maya is the nature of the world we can see, but enlightenment lies beyond maya.

- Illusion my hoop, it's a big white spot on satellite imagery. No signal can penetrate it, and people who try to cross through die or turn back.
- Orbital DK

RULES

Below are rules for various astral phenomena. They complement and sometimes extend the rules from *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition* and *Street Grimoire*.

ASTRAL PHENOMENA

ASTRAL RIFT

Astral rifts are where the barrier between the metaplanes have thinned, allowing a bridge between them. This rift allows Awakened and mundanes alike to astrally project and cross over to that metaplane. Uninitiated magicians can travel without being stopped by the Dweller on the Threshold (p. 317, *SR5*). Not all of them are stable, so if the rift closes, an Awakened individual must find another way back. Note that Awakened people can stay on the metaplane without worry about ceasing to exist (p. 314, *SR5*). Mundanes, however, are bound to the astral rift and must use it to get back to their body. If their body is removed from the rift area or it closes, the person fades into oblivion in a number hours equal to their Essence stat.

ASTRAL SHALLOWS

Astral shallows are places where the barrier between the astral and material planes has become thin, allowing even a mundane to use it like a window to perceive the astral plane. Awakened people who can normally astrally perceive can switch between astral and normal vision with a Free Action instead of a Simple Action. While within the astral shallow, one may look at astral forms, but you cannot touch them unless you become dual natured through astral perception or projection. Astral shallows are normally temporary in nature, lasting a few hours or days; there are geomancers, however, who have learned to build their own permanent astral shallow in the form of an arcane window.

BACKGROUND COUNT

A background count is a measurement of a change of mana levels in the area. It is measured on a scale from -24 to 24, with 0 considered normal mana levels. A negative value relates to lower-than-normal mana available to be used for magic (called mana ebbs and voids). A positive value relates to mana that has been aspected in some fashion, making it harder to control (called domains and warps). Regardless if the Rating is a positive or negative number, use the absolute value in determining how it affects the use of magic in the area (with exceptions noted below). For more information on background counts, see p. 30, *Street Grimoire*.

MANA STORM

Mana storms are violent and unpredictable disturbances of mana that wander randomly and leave swathes of magical destruction and chaos in their wake. For rules on mana storms, see p. 36, *Street Grimoire*.

THE MIST

The Mist is a rolling fog that is dense enough to block sunlight. It can reach heights of fourteen meters, and it defies normal weather needed to manifest or dissipate it. Fortunately it only materializes in Brittany, France. It has a positive background count aspected toward Fae spirits with a Force between 3 and 10, which correlates to the shifting background count of the phenomenon, meaning the Rating from one location to another varies from 3 to 10. The Mist gives a sense of emptiness both on the physical and astral plane. It obscures physical perception and scrambles detection senses, signal range, and communication for living beings as well as electronic devices and drones. Increase noise by the Force of the Mist, and add the Mist Force as a modifier to ranged attacks or perception tests. Even at distances of just over 3 meters, objects start to be obscured and sounds muffled. The Mist is accompanied by unusual silence and weird displays of light and shadow. This affects metahumans the same way the spell Confusion does. Treat this spell as being cast with a Spellcasting Test using the Mist's local Force x 2 [Force]. Movement through the Mist is also affected, causing more disorientation. Use the Mist's Force as the Magic attribute in using the Movement power against living beings; use Force x 2 against vehicles (see p. 399, *SR5*; assume the Mist has a Willpower of zero). The Mist is also unnerving; add +2 to the threshold of Composure Tests taken within the Mist. With every hour spent in the Mist, the players must make a Composure Test (p. 152, *SR5*).

The Mist also makes summoned and bound spirits want to flee: when a spirit contacts the Mist, it tries to leave, even if it is following other orders. Apply a -1 dice pool modifier to all active tests for each spirit that must act within the Mist, even those bound to a spellcaster. The magician may attempt to bring the spirit back under control (p. 301, *SR5*). If this fails, the spirit will not be able to be called for services until the magician is out of the Mist or spends an additional service.

Finally, when the Mist has a Force of 6 or more, it can open up astral rifts—even deep astral rifts that travelers cannot see before it's too late. Astral rifts are gateways to metaplanes that even mundanes can use, sometimes unwillingly.

DAOINEANN DRAOIDHEIL

Daoineann Draoidheils are special versions of mana storms. They are permanent combinations of mana and physical storms aspected towards the Druidic tradition. The Force of these storms hovers between 8 and 12, with an equivalent positive background count. They have all the qualities of a normal mana storm, but they don't dissipate, nor do they move from their relative physical position. In the Daoineann Draoidheil, all spells are subject to random scattering, not just the indirect combat spells (p. 283, *SR5*). Preparations are also affected by this scattering once triggered. If the spell requires a specific target, then the gamemaster can choose the closest target to where the spell goes off.

FOVEAE

Foveae are moving mana voids. They have a Force between 7 and 12 with an equivalent negative background count. Astrally they are tornado in shape with a height approximately equal to their Force in kilometers. Foveae have a negative impact on reagents. After passing through an area, treat the background count as the number of weeks it will take for the area to recover (p. 317, *SR5*). The absence of mana within the Foveae has an effect on preparations, hastening the loss of potency. While a preparation is in Foveae, the potency reduces by 1 every half hour instead of every hour (or if fixated, every 6 hours instead of every day).

Foveae do not last more than 24 hours. Every 2 hours, the Force of the Foveae drops by 1. Once its Force is below 4, it stops moving and dissipates into a mana ebb. This mana ebb is temporary; the mana level returns to normal levels at the same rate, losing a point of Force every two hours.

MAYA CLOUD

The Maya Cloud is another special version of a mana storm. It has a Force and equivalent positive background count between 14 and 16. It's fixed in a dome shape covering 5 million square kilometers and is up to 100 kilometers thick. The background count is aspected to magic unique to specific artifacts. Like the Mist, the Force of the cloud is applied as a dice pool modifier for perception within and through the cloud and is added as a noise modifier to signal ranges and devices. The Maya Cloud perpetually generates elements of ice, lightning, and snow, making the area outside the Maya Cloud hazardous for travel. The Maya Cloud is extraordinary in covering whole mountains, making it a hazard to all but sub-orbital flights.

THE VEIL

The Veil is permanent ring of churning storms with inverted rain drawn from the ocean to the cloud. It has a Force between 12 and 14 with an equivalent positive background count attuned to certain Awakened elves that can navigate the storm. The ring has a diameter of almost 600 kilometers and is 20 meters thick. Normal storms are

quickly generated from the veil, making air traffic equally difficult. The veil sustains a Chaotic World spell at a Force equal to its own. It also is designed to prevent any traveler from crossing the Veil without electronic or automatic navigation. The traveler will exit from the Veil at some point other than what they intended due to the confusion.

VOID

Voids are permanent points where there is no mana level. Very little life can survive in a void because of whatever pollution/magic/radiation created it. Voids have a Force between 13 and 20 with equivalent negative background count. They can range in size from five hundred square meters to areas four kilometers in diameter. The Cattenom Void is an especially large example as it is 6 kilometers in diameter and Force 20. The perimeter of a void is irregular and can fluctuate up to ten meters. Voids are dangerous to all magic items and Awakened beings. Reagents in a void are instantly drained of mana, and any foci left in a Void for over their Force in hours (active or not) are permanently destroyed.

FREE SPIRITS

Basic rules concerning free spirits can be found on p. 203, *Street Grimoire*.

MOVEMENT

Unless otherwise noted, on the physical plane, spirits' Walking rate is Agility x 2. Their Running rate is Agility x 4. They use the Running skill to sprint for +2 meters per hit. Once they inhabit a vessel they use the vessel's mobility and agility.

NEW SPIRITS

GUM TOAD (DEMON)

Gum toads appear as large grey-and-white blobs with some resemblance to toads. They are bipedal when it suits them, though they can also jump or slide across the ground. When standing, they are up to three meters in height. Their skin is smooth and coated with slime that they can gather and hurl. Gum toad slime is sticky to everything but the spirits that create it. They like to immobilize their victims in the slime and then body-slam them in an attempt to smother them. Unless they are commanded to do something, they are slothful and just lie around, looking for any creature to come by to amuse them. They toy with their victims by watching them try to get out of the sticky situation before suffocation.

SR5

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
F+3	F-2	F	F+3	F-1	F	F	F+1	F	F	F

Initiative	(F x 2) + 2D6
Astral Initiative	(F x 2) + 3D6
Movement	(F – 2) x 2 / (F – 2) x 4
Skills	Assensing, Astral Combat, Perception, Unarmed Combat
Powers	Astral Form, Armor (14), Banishing Resistance, Binding (LOS, Touch, and Self), Concealment, Engulf, Materialization, Movement, Sapience, Search
Special	Gum toads are too lazy to run unless commanded. Living on the Metaplane of Man has acclimated them to not suffering from Evanescence on the physical plane.

SR4A

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
F+3	F	F	F	F+1	F	F	F-2	F	R	R

Astral INIT/IP	(F x 2) + 2, 3
Movement	10/20
Skills	Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Exotic Ranged Weapon, Perception, Unarmed Combat
Powers	Astral Form, Armor (8/10), Binding, Banishing Resistance, Concealment, Engulf, Materialization, Movement, Sapience, Search

CRAWLER (DEMON)

The Crawler looks like an insect, roughly a meter in length with what appear to be long, flexible legs. The legs, though, are actually six large, mobile antennae protruding from its chin. It's a dangerous adversary, able to leap great distances and cling to walls in order to ambush its victims. While it is not mindless consumer like the Invae, it can eat almost anything with its large head and mouth. This includes metahuman flesh, though it consumes that more from a sense of malicious torture than to satisfy its hunger.

The spirit form of the crawler suffers from Evanesence like other deep metaplanar creatures. They require a prepared living vessel to escape the effects. Creation of a crawler in this way is a very macabre process. The crawler is a parasitic entity, invading the host in completion of the ritual. It starts out small, forming in the victim's brain, then grows larger, feeding on the victim. Within thirty days the crawler has grown too large for the vessel's skull and detaches the vessel's head from the neck. Then it completes its transformation. Disturbingly it retains some of the vessel's traits, such as eye and hair color. The true threat of the crawler is that it is "born" into the physical plane and not as a true flesh form. This allows it to hide more efficiently in our world. For the first twenty days, the crawler is vulnerable as the death of the vessel means certain death for it. After that, it can survive on its own.

SR5

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
F+4	F	F+3	F+6	F+1	F	F+1	F+1	F	F	F

Initiative	((F x 2) + 6) + 2D6
Astral Initiative	((F x 2) + 6) + 3D6
Movement	F x 2 / F x 4
Skills	Assensing, Astral Combat, Perception, Running, Shadowing, Unarmed Combat
Powers	Astral Form, Astral Perception, Banishing Resistance, Concealment, Confusion, Devour, Hardened Armor (6), Inhabitation (living vessels), Movement, Sapience, Search, Skill (the crawler can retain a number of skills belonging to its vessel equal to its Force. Each skill is at the vessel's skill rating, not the crawler's Force)
Weakness	Evanescence (Extreme) (Spirit only)
Special	A grown crawler is not dual natured like other spirits.

SR4A

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
F+4	F	F+1	F+6	F+1	F+1	F	F+1	F	F	F

Init	(F x 2) + 6
IP	3
Astral INIT/IP	(F x 2) + 8 / 3
Movement	15/35
Skills	Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Perception, Shadowing, Unarmed Combat
Powers	Astral Form, Astral Perception, Banishing Resistance, Concealment, Confusion, Devour, Hardened Armor (8), Inhabitation (living vessels), Movement, Sapience, Search, Skill (the crawler can retain a number of skills belonging to its vessel equal to its Force. Each skill is at the vessel's skill rating, not the crawler's Force)

GHASTS (DEMON)

Ghasts are bizarre winged creatures with their faces replaced with rows of horns. How they live is beyond metahuman understanding. They are quiet scavengers on their own metaplane and messengers for larger spirits such as the Nephilim. Their touch is ice cold and stiffens muscles. Victims are unable to move as they are carried off to a fate it's better to not think about.

SR5

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
F+2	F	F+2	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F

Initiative	((F x 2) + 2) + 2D6
Astral Initiative	(F x 2) + 3D6
Movement	F x 2 / F x 4
Skills	Assensing, Astral Combat, Flight, Perception, Spellcasting, Unarmed Combat
Powers	Accident, Astral Form, Banishing Resistance, Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision, Thermographic Vision, Spatial Sense), Materialization, Paralyzing Touch, Sapience, Silence, Vanishing
Weaknesses	Evanescence (Severe)
Special	The Flight skill allows ghasts to increase movement at +5 meters per hit

SR4A

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
F+2	F	F+2	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F

Init	F x 2
IP	2
Astral INIT/IP	F x 2 / 3
Movement	10/20 (30/50 flight)
Skills	Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Flight, Perception, Spellcasting, Unarmed Combat
Powers	Accident, Astral Form, Banishing Resistance, Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision, Spatial Sense, Thermographic Vision), Materialization, Paralyzing Touch, Sapience, Silence, Vanishing
Weaknesses	Evanescence

VRYGOTHS

The Vrygoths are demonic spirits from the deep metaplanes. They have secret ritualistic knowledge and powers that can sustain mortal life beyond normal expectations. Vrygoths appear as gorilla-like creatures with horns and batwings. While brutish in appearance, they are intelligent. Vrygoths live within a two-caste system, the religious caste and warrior caste. The religious caste members undergo self-mutilation and scarification as they don the saffron robes. They learn secrets to immortality from their red-eyed god in the void. Such knowledge is given in pacts, at great cost to the recipient. The warrior caste is just that, warriors.

There are rumors of a tome with rituals that can summon vrygoths to Earth. They require a living metahuman vessel to inhabit. A hybrid-form vrygoth could be mistaken for a vampire with large fangs, elongated arms and fingernails; some even manifest bat-like wings. A true-form vrygoth normally appears human, though it has the ability to shift into its bestial form.

SR5

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
F+4	F	F	F+3	F	F+2	F	F	F	F	F

Initiative	(F x 2) + 2D6
Astral Initiative	(F x 2) + 3D6
Movement	F x 2 / F x 4
Skills	Assensing, Astral Combat, Flight, Perception, Spellcasting, Unarmed Combat
Powers	Astral Form, Aura Masking, Banishing Resistance, Energy Drain (Essence), Enhanced Senses (Thermographic Vision), Inhabitation (Living Vessels), Innate Spell (Foreboding), Materialization, Sapience, Shift (metahuman (The metahuman form they can shift to is the vessel with which they merge)), Transfer Energy (Essence), Vanishing
Weaknesses	Evanescence (Moderate)
Special	Flight skill allows vrygoths to increase movement at +10 per hit through the air

SR4A

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
F+4	F	F	F+3	F	F+2	F	F	F	F	F

Init	(F x 2) + 2
IP	2
Astral Initiative/IP	F x 2/3
Movement	15/45 (10/25 Flight)
Skills	Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Flight, Perception, Spellcasting, Unarmed Combat
Powers	Astral Form, Aura Masking, Banishing Resistance, Energy Drain (Essence), Enhanced Senses (Thermographic Vision), Innate Spell (Foreboding), Inhabitation (Living Vessels), Materialization, Sapience, Shift (metahuman (The metahuman form they can shift to is the vessel with which they merge)), Transfer Energy (Essence), Vanishing
Weaknesses	Evanescence

GREMLIN

Gremlins are in the same group of spirits as shedim and imps. They are formless spirits who can possess mechanical devices. They prefer devices with moving parts so they can animate them. They are unable, however, to control software. So while a commlink is mostly an elec-

tronic device and a gremlin cannot control how the software runs on it, it can manipulate other things like buttons, cooling fans, or touch screens on the device.

Gremlins, like their imp cousins, attempt to seduce metahumans for Karma, though gremlins can farm a larger group of victims. They are about as patient as imps, luring the victim in with the promise that this car, this gun, or this drone is all they need to succeed, and that the item is unique and special. When the victim needs the equipment the most, that's when the gremlin strikes, attempting to drain Karma in exchange for extra help. Gremlins have a much bigger playground than imps and can be content in jumping from device to device, leaving a trail of bricked devices in its wake before finding the right victim.

SR5

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
F	F	F+3	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F

Initiative	((F x 2) + 3) + 2D6
Astral Initiative	(F x 2) + 3D6
Movement	F x 2 / F x 4
Skills	Assensing, Astral Combat, Con, Counterspelling, Intimidation, Perception, Spellcasting, Unarmed Combat
Powers	Accident, Aura Masking, Desire Reflection, Energy Drain (Karma), Influence, Innate Spell (Alter Memory), Movement, Inhabitation (inanimate mechanical devices only), Psychokinesis (occupied mechanical device only)
Optional Powers	Banishing Resistance, Compulsion, Empathy
Weaknesses	Evanescence (Moderate)
Special	A gremlin in astral form can use only mana-based powers. A gremlin is also more familiar with mechanical devices, so treat all devices it attempts to inhabit as "prepared."

SR4A

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
F	F	F+3	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F

Init	(F x 2) + 3
IP	2
Astral Initiative/IP	F x 2 / 3
Movement	10/25
Skills	Assensing, Astral Combat, Con, Counterspelling, Dodge, Intimidation, Perception, Spellcasting, Unarmed Combat
Powers	Accident, Aura Masking, Banishing Resistance, Compulsion, Desire Reflection, Empathy, Energy Drain (Karma), Influence, Innate Spell (Alter Memory), Movement, Possession (inanimate mechanical devices only), Psychokinesis (occupied mechanical device only)
Weaknesses	Evanescence
Notes	A gremlin in astral form can use only mana-based powers. A gremlin also much more familiar with mechanical devices, so treat all devices it attempts to inhabit as "prepared."

ANANSI

The anansi are spirits in the form of very large spiders. They live in tribes throughout the Web. Like the Invae, they have diversified themselves. Only the leaders communicate with the metahuman world; the rest of the tribes are perceived as unworthy of their leaders' council. While they can inhabit a living vessel, they religiously are against doing so except in dire need. Possession and destruction of a host is how lesser beings such as the Invae infest the metaplanes. Some tribes of anansi build great cities on giant webs, while others reinforce tunnels to a vast labyrinth.

Cousins to the anansi tribes are the scorpius tribes with a poisonous tail and claws, and the solifuge tribes that neither spin webs or have a poisonous sting, but have a great maw of mashing teeth.

SR5

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
F	F+2	F+2	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F

Initiative	((F x 2) + 2) + 2D6
Astral Initiative	(F x 2) + 3D6
Skills	Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Infiltration, Perception, Sneaking, Unarmed Combat
Powers	Animal Control (Spider Type), Astral Form, Binding (Touch), Concealment, Enhanced Senses (Smell, Thermographic Vision, or Ultrasound), Movement, Reinforcement, Sapience, Search
Optional Powers	Confusion, Guard, Inhabitation (Living Vessels), Natural Weapon (DV = Force Physical damage, AP -1), Venom
Weaknesses	Allergy (Insecticides, Moderate), Evanescence (Moderate)
Note	Solifuge and scorpius spirits have the same stats, but remove Binding and Reinforcement and move Natural weapon and Venom as Powers instead of Optional Powers.

SR4A										
B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
F	F+2	F+2	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F

Astral INIT/IP	Fx2/3
Movement	10/45
Skills	Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Infiltration, Perception, Shadowing, Unarmed Combat
Powers	Animal Control (Spider Type), Astral Form, Binding, Concealment, Enhanced Senses (Smell, Thermographic Vision, or Ultrasound), Movement, Reinforcement, Sapience, Search
Optional Powers	Confusion, Guard, Inhabitation (Living Vessels), Natural Weapon (DV = Force Physical damage, AP -1), Venom
Weaknesses	Allergy (Insecticides, Light), Evanescence
Note	Solifuge and scorpius spirits have the same stats, but remove Binding and Reinforcement and move Natural weapon and Venom as Powers instead of Optional Powers.

TSUCHIGUMO WARRIOR

The Tsuchigumo warriors are more humanoid than the rest of the tribes. A tsuchigumo averages 3.5 meters in height with an elongated torso for its multiple limbs, each ending in three fingered hands. They don't have the tough chitinous skin like the others, so they manufacture clothes and housing for protection.

SR5										
B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
F+2	F+2	F+1	F+3	F	F	F	F	F	F	F

Initiative	((F x 2) +1) + 2D6
Astral Initiative	(F x 2) + 3D6
Skills	Assensing, Astral Combat, Counterspelling, Perception, Unarmed Combat
Powers	Astral Form, Binding (LOS), Fear, Natural Weapon (DV = (Force +2) Physical damage, AP –1), Reinforcement, Sapience
Optional Powers	Concealment, Inhabitation (Living Vessels), Magical Guard, Noxious Breath, Skill (the spirit may be given an additional Combat skill instead of an optional power), Venom
Weaknesses	Allergy (Insecticides, Moderate), Evanescence (Moderate)

SR4A										
B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
F+2	F+2	F+1	F+3	F	F	F	F	F	F	F

Initiative	(F x 2) + 1
IP	2
Astral INIT/IP	F x 2 / 3
Movement	10/45
Skills	Assensing, Astral Combat, Counterspelling, Dodge, Exotic Ranged Weapon, Perception, Unarmed Combat
Powers	Astral Form, Binding, Fear, Natural Weapon (DV = (Force +2) Physical damage, AP –1), Reinforcement, Sapience
Optional Powers	Concealment, Inhabitation (Living Vessels), Magical Guard, Noxious Breath, Skill (the spirit may be given an additional Combat skill instead of an optional power), Venom
Weaknesses	Allergy (Insecticides, Light), Evanescence

SPIRIT POWERS

SHIFT

Type: M **Action:** Complex
Range: Self **Duration:** Special

This power allows the critter to take on the shape of a specific animal or metahuman, and back to its original form. The critter's attribute ratings carry over to the new form, as do any purely internal deltaware implants; non-deltaware implants are automatically rejected during the change, causing (total Essence cost of implants x 10, round down)P damage—the character does not recover the Essence from implants lost in this fashion. Purely cosmetic alterations such as piercings and tattoos are lost as well, though this does not injure the critter. When in their new shape, the creature gains access to all non-paranormal abilities innate to that race, including Armor, Natural Weapons, and Enhanced Senses, if any. The creature retains all of its paranormal powers in its new form. Once the critter uses the shift power, it remains in its current form until it decides to shift back. The critter does not suffer a -2 penalty for sustaining this power. This power only affects the creature's physical form, not its clothing or equipment; the process of the change destroys most fabrics.

SKILL

The spirit can have an active skill instead of a power. This power is accompanied by what skill can be added to the spirits list of skills. This skill cannot be Matrix related, nor can be from the conjuring, enchanting, or resonance skill groups

TRANSFER ENERGY (ESSENCE)

Type: P **Action:** Complex
Range: Touch **Duration:** Permanent

Transfer Energy Ability allows Energy (Essence, Magic,

or Force) drained by the creature to be given to another subject through a Spirit Pact. If the subject does not have the ability to drain that specific energy themselves, then they cannot use the energy to boost other attributes than the associated attribute (Essence to Essence, Magic to Magic) nor can they use it if they don't have the attribute (ex. Metahumans cannot use Force energy from spirits), this temporary boost lasts 24 hours before dissipating. Also if the subject the energy is transferred to does not have the ability to drain it themselves, it can become addicting (*SR5,* p. 414). The addiction rating is equal to the value of energy passed from the spirit.

VANISHING

Type: M **Action:** Free
Range: Self **Duration:** Special

Creatures with the Vanishing power have the ability to disappear entirely from the physical and astral planes at will, leaving no trace of their existence. While the disappearance can be captured on film, video or trideo cameras with ease, there is no way known to stop or prevent it as neither physical nor magical barriers can stop a creature from vanishing. Though no one knows where creatures with the Vanishing power go when they disappear, paranaturalists and occultists speculate that they go to the metaplanes of astral space to which the fey are native to. They may also reappear with a Complex Action; although they may choose to materialize directly without going through astral space, although they may also choose to appear there if they want to.

KORRIGAN PACT

The Korrigan have a way of getting around beyond normal astral travel. A mage that makes a deal with a Korrigan, would find that no matter where they are, the Korrigan can find them, both physically and astrally. A magician's wards are easily bypassed by a korrigan though the pact. A deal with a Korrigan is a magical link much like the bond between a conjurer and his spirit. A mage should be careful with making deals with the Korrigan as they will not leave the magician alone until the deal is complete. It wouldn't be surprising if the Korrigan chase the magician beyond death with the bond to hold them to the deal.